

THE ALDINE EDITION
OF THE BRITISH
POETS



THE POEMS OF COLLINS

LONDON : GEORGE BELL AND SONS
~~PORTUGAL~~ ST. LINCOLN'S INN, W.C.
CAMBRIDGE : DEIGHTON, BELL & CO.
NEW YORK : THE MACMILLAN CO.
BOMBAY : A. H. WHEELER & CO.



William Collins.

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THE POETICAL WORKS OF
WILLIAM COLLINS

EDITED, WITH MEMOIR, BY

W. MOY THOMAS



LONDON
GEORGE BELL AND SONS

1904

CHISWICK PRESS : CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.



P R E F A C E.

SOME variations having been introduced, by the editor of this volume, into the text of the "Ode to Evening," and the "Ode to a Lady on the Death of Col. Ross," it may be necessary here to explain his authority for so doing.

The "Ode to Evening" first appeared in the volume of Collins's Odes, published by Millar in December, 1746. The Ode on the death of Col. Ross (first printed in "Dodsley's Museum," in June of that year), was also inserted in the volume referred to. Collins never republished his Odes in an independent form; but these two poems, with considerable variations, were subsequently inserted in the second edition of "Dodsley's Collection," published in 1748. Such variations could not have been introduced by Dodsley without authority; or without calling forth a protest from the author. It has, moreover, been remarked by a recent writer,* that the "Ode to Evening" was reprinted in Collins's lifetime by his intimate friend, Thomas Warton, in the "Union," and that all the variations alluded to were there adopted. It is, therefore, impossible to doubt the authority of Dodsley; although all editors of Collins, as pointed out by the writer alluded to, have hitherto printed from a text arbitrarily com-

pounded of the two versions. In the present edition the text of Dodsley in these instances has been adopted—the several passages as they stood in the first edition being given in the margin. The propriety of Collins's alterations must be obvious to all readers of good taste. In so exquisite a miniature as the "Ode to Evening," every tint and touch which the hand of the artist has bestowed upon it is precious, and will be carefully preserved by an editor who has "a feeling of his calling."

All the remaining Odes in the edition of 1746, (dated 1747,) are printed from that volume; and these and all the other poems (with one exception) have been carefully collated with the original authorities. The exception referred to is the "Epistle to ~~Sir Thomas Hanmer~~," of which the editor has not been so fortunate as to find a copy of the author's edition, and has, therefore, trusted to the version in the careful and beautiful edition of Collins published by Mr. Dyce.

The editor desires to express here his acknowledgment of the kind assistance which he has received, in collecting materials for his short Memoir, from the Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, from Dr. Bloxam of Magdalen College, from the Warden of Winchester College, and from the Head Master of the Prebendal School in Chichester: also to record his obligation to Mr. Charles Crocker of Chichester for the trouble which he was good enough to take in searching the Parochial Registers, and the records in the Registry of Wills in that city, for notices of the poet or his family.

W MOY THOMAS



CONTENTS.

M	MEMOIR of Collins, by W. Moy Thomas	Page ix
ORIENTAL ECLOGUES.		
	Selim ; or, The Shepherd's Moral	5
	Hassan ; or, The Camel Driver	9
	Abra ; or, The Georgian Sultana	13
	Agib and Secander ; or, The Fugitives	17

To Pity		23
To Fear		26
To Simplicity		30
On the Poetical Character		33
To Mercy		37
To Liberty		39
To a Lady, on the Death of Colonel Ross, written in May, 1745		47
Written in the same Year		51
To Evening		52
To Peace		56
The Manners		58
The Passions		62
On the Death of Thomson		68
On the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland ; considered as the subject of Poetry ; in- scribed to Mr. John Home		71

	Page
An Epistle, addressed to Sir Thomas Hanmer, on his Edition of Shakespeare's Works	86
Dirge in Cymbeline, sung by Guiderus and Arvir- gus over Fidele, supposed to be dead	96
Verses written on a Paper which contained a Piece of Bride-cake, given to the Author by a Lady	98
To Miss Aurelia C——r, on her Weeping at her Sister's Wedding	100
Sonnet	100
Song. The Sentiments borrowed from Shakespeare	101



MEMOIR OF COLLINS.

BY WILLIAM MOY THOMAS.

WILLIAM Collins was born in the city of Chichester, on Christmas-day, 1721. The date of his baptism in the Register of the parish of St. Peter-the-Great, *alias* subdeanery, is 1721, 1 Jan^y; but it is evident, on examination of the book, that the entry was made according to the ecclesiastical year, ending on the 24th of March. He was the son of William Collins, a hatter in Chichester, who was at that time Mayor of the city, an office he had filled twice before. The poet's father married, in 1703, Elizabeth the daughter of Edmund and Magdalen Martyn, of Southcott, near West Wittŕing, a village in the neighbourhood.* Two daughters were the fruit of this marriage; Elizabeth, born in 1704, and

* "1703, Feb. 13, Mr. William Collins of Chichester, hatter, and Elizabeth Martin of West Wettring."—Register of Ernley.

Anne born in the following year. They do not appear to have had any other child until the birth of William Collins in 1721; his mother being then about forty years of age.

There appears to be little doubt that Collins was sent, when very young, to the Prebendal school—an ancient institution in Chichester founded by Edward Storey, afterwards Bishop of that city, in the reign of Edward the Fourth. No record of names was kept at that time; but tradition in the school has long claimed Collins for one of its scholars; an evidence which has at least been thought sufficient in the cases of Selden, Bishop Juxon, and Hurdis, who are stated to have been educated here. Collins was early designed by his parents for the Church; the poet's mother having connections among the clergy, from whom some advancement was no doubt expected. Young Collins was removed from Chichester and admitted a scholar on the foundation of Winchester College, on the 19th of January, 1733.* The scholars are formally elected; but the choice falls only upon such as have influence with the nominees, who are mostly clergymen. In this venerable institution, where the scholars on the foundation wear the dress

* "Gulielm^{us} Collins de Chichester, Com. Sussex, Adm. 19 Jan., 1733."—Coll. Register.

prescribed by the rules of the founder, in which rejoicings over a holiday are sung in ancient Latin verse, and terms and phrases long fallen into disuse without its walls are still the current talk of healthy boys, Collins remained seven years. The Master was then Dr. Burton, a name that will be long associated with the college. Among Collins's schoolfellows were William Whitehead and Joseph Warton the poets, and Hampton, afterwards the translator of Polybius. Whitehead, who was the son of an humble tradesman at Cambridge, spoke afterwards of Dr. Burton in terms of respect :

The classic streams with early thirst I caught,
What time, they say, the muses revelled most,
When Bigg presided, and when Burton taught.

Lines to Bishop I ooth

Dr. Burton afterwards left his large house for the perpetual benefit of head masters and commoners, with a number of portraits of his favourite commoner pupils, as inalienable heir-looms. These comprise, however, no portrait of Collins, Hampton, Warton, or any other *foundation* boy.

About September, 1733, the school received an illustrious guest. Pope, being then staying at Lord Peterborough's, near Southampton, paid a visit, with his host, to Winchester College, where

he proposed a subject for a poem. Collins was then too young to contest the prizes, which were carried off by Whitehead and Hampton; but he must have seen Pope on that occasion.* In the register of new books in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1734, is mentioned a poem on the Royal Nuptials "by William Collins, printed for J. Roberts, pr. 6*d*." Mr. Dyce sought for this poem in vain; and the writer of this Memoir has been equally unsuccessful in his endeavours to find a copy. Collins had then but shortly before completed his twelfth year, and it is therefore improbable that he could at this time have appeared in an independent publication. Johnson speaks of verses published five years later as those by which he "first courted the notice of the public;" and no one has ever mentioned the poem in question as written by Collins. On the

* To those who feel a pleasure in connecting such names, by links however slight, the following circumstances may be interesting. Pope's intimate friend, John Caryll, of the Rape of the Lock, resided at South Harting, a few miles from Chichester, where Pope frequently visited him. Several Collingses, probably connections of the Chichester branch, lived then at Harting—one of them, Richard Collins, being a tenant of Caryll's. In some private manuscript accounts kept by Caryll appear frequent entries near this time. "To Collins of Chichester for a hat." Dr. Durnford, who married Collins's sister, corresponded largely with Caryll, and was for some time Vicar of South Harting.

other hand, Collins appears to have made verses as early as Pope. He is said at twelve years old to have written a poem "On the Battle of the Schoolbooks," at Winchester, probably suggested by Swift's satire, of which the line—

"And every Gradus flapped his leathern wing"—

was afterwards remembered.

Literary enthusiasm was abundant in the school in those days, when, according to Whitehead, "the Muses revelled most." The father of Joseph Warton was a writer of tolerable verses, and a friend of Pope and other writers of that day; and Joseph, like his brother Thomas, had determined to be a poet. Collins here formed an intimacy with the former which lasted during his life. At Winchester, and when about seventeen years old, according to Warton, Collins wrote his Persian Eclogues, having been reading that volume of Salmon's *Modern History* which describes Persia. In January, 1739, some lines by Collins appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*—at that time the particular friend and fosterer of youthful poetical genius. In October of that year "Mr. Urban" inserted a "Sonnet" from Collins, together with some verses of J. Warton, and another schoolfellow, which came, he tells us, "in one letter." It is a pleasing

fact, of which we are informed by Dr. Wool, in his memoir of J. Warton, that a criticism on the three poems from Winchester, which appeared in the following number, was written by Johnson, then toiling in poverty and obscurity for Cave. The future friend and biographer of Collins gives the palm to the "Sonnet." On the 21st of March, 1740, he was formally admitted a commoner of Queen's College; but he did not go to Oxford until some time afterwards.

According to the custom of Winchester, each boy is superannuated on the first election day after he has attained the age of eighteen. On that day candidates from among the scholars undergo an examination, and their names are subsequently inscribed, in the order of their degrees of proficiency on a roll for admission to any vacancy that may occur, during the succeeding year, at New College, Oxford. In the summer of 1740, Collins was elected and placed first upon the roll, a position implying distinguished merit—his friend, Joseph Warton, afterwards the respected head master of Winchester, being placed second at the same time. Collins unfortunately derived no

* "1740, William Collins, Comr. Mar. 21."—Register of Queen's Coll.

"William Collins was matriculated at Oxford, 22 Mar. 1739-40, aged 18. Son of William Collins, generous." Univ. Reg. of Matriculations.

benefit from his success; for no vacancy occurred during the following year—a rare misfortune, which had, however, in like manner befallen the poet Young some years before.

On the 29th of July, 1741, Collins was admitted a Demy of Magdalen College*—it is said through the influence of Dr. William Payne, then a fellow of that college, and afterwards Rector of Findon in Sussex, who was a cousin of the poet. He had also a warm patron and friend in his mother's brother, Lieut. Col. Martyn, of Wolfe's Regiment of Foot.† At college Collins continued to devote himself to poetry. It is stated by Langhorne that he was at this time distinguished for genius and indolence, and that the few exercises which he could be induced to write bore evident marks of both qualities. Among his college acquaintances were Hampton and Gilbert White, and his constant friends the two Wartons. In January, 1742, he published, in London, his *Persian Eclogues*, afterwards republished with the title of "*Oriental*

* "A. D. 1741, July 29, were admitted Demies of Magdalen College, Thomas Vernon * * and William Collins; the latter, aged 19, from Chichester, Co. Sussex." *Mag. Coll. Reg*

† The 8th Regiment of Foot, sometimes called "The King's Own." Martyn commanded this regiment at Falkirk, Calloden, Roucoux, and Val.

Eclogues;”* and in December, 1746, his “Epistle to Sir Thomas Hanmer on his Edition of Shakspeare.” Both publications were anonymous; but, the latter was said to be “by a gentleman of Oxford.’

On November the 18th, 1743, Collins took the degree of Bachelor of Arts.† It is not known in what month, or under what circumstances, he left Oxford. There is no mention of his resignation in the college register. His Epistle to Hanmer, however, is dated Oxford, Dec. 3, 1743, and it is only certain that he must have quitted the college at some time before the July election in 1744. It has been hinted that his abrupt departure was consequent upon debts to tradesmen in Oxford; but it is possible that the illness of his mother, who was buried at Chichester, on the 6th of July in that year, was the true cause. Collins had lost his father while at Winchester school. By the death of his mother he obtained, with his two sisters, a share in copyhold property in the “Manor of Carkham,” [Cackham?] Sussex,

* Published by Roberts. In the private ledger of Woodfall the printer appears the following entry: “1741, Dec. 10, Persian Eclogues, 1½ shts., No. 500. Reprinting ½ sheet” Notes and Queries, vol. xi., p. 419.

† “A. D. 1743, Nov. 18, William Collins and Thomas Vernon were presented to the degree of Bachelor of Arts.” Mag. Coll. Reg

secured by his mother's marriage-settlement to her children. Collins appears to have already felt an unwillingness to enter the profession for which he was designed. His uncle, *Lient. Col. Martyn*, was at this time with his regiment in Flanders, and it is said that at this period Collins was invited to visit him there, with a view to his entering the army.* We are told that his uncle thought him "too indolent even for the army:" but it is more probable that the soldier viewed with some contempt the literary taste and scholarship of the poet. Collins returned to England, and by his uncle's desire applied to *Mr. Green*, then Rector of Birdham near Chichester, for a title to a curacy. This he obtained, with a letter of recommendation to the Bishop, *Dr. Mawson*, with which and the necessary credentials he repaired to London. It is related that he was dissuaded by his friend *Mr. Hardham*, a wealthy tobacconist in Fleet Street, from taking orders.

From that time Collins appears to have adopted the precarious profession of a man of letters. He disposed of the property inherited

* Other accounts place the date of Collins's visit to Flanders later. I follow *Hy*, who was a fellow-townsmen of Collins, and who was evidently well informed. He was no doubt acquainted with Collins's sister, *Mrs. Durnford*.

from his mother to his relative Mr. George Payne, and probably subsisted at this period on the proceeds.* He became a frequenter of the leading coffee-houses, and contracted an acquaintance with actors and the theatre. He soon dissipated his small fortune, and fell into pecuniary embarrassments. About this time he made the acquaintance of Johnson, who regarded him through life with a friendship and affection rarely felt by him for any, but the friends and companions of his adversity. "Collins," says Johnson, "had many projects in his head." He "planned several tragedies," and was a loungeur in the shop of Davies the dramatic bookseller in Covent Garden. He designed great works, and published "Proposals for a History of the Revival of Learning"—a project which he never wholly abandoned; and he appears to have sketched out some articles for the *Biographia Britannica*, then publishing in numbers, but to have finished none. On one occasion, when hiding from bailiffs, Johnson being admitted to him, undertook, as in the case of Goldsmith, to rescue him from his difficulties; but he took to

* Collins's sisters were as prudent as he was extravagant. The younger, afterwards wife of Lieut. Tanner, repurchased her brother's share from Mr. Payne; if indeed it were not in fact purchased by him in trust for her.

market a commodity less substantial than Goldsmith's immortal story. He had nothing to offer but Collins's undertaking to execute a translation of Aristotle's Poetics with a commentary; but he obtained an advance from the bookseller, which enabled Collins to escape into the country. Soon after the bookseller's guineas were repaid, and the translation neglected.

Much speculation has taken place as to the causes of Collins's irresolution; but human motives are not easily determined. The evidences are too many to doubt, that he was at this time indolent and undecided; but fond of pleasure and eager for excitement. His truest friend has spoken of habits of dissipation and long association with "fortuitous companions." But his studies were extensive, and his scholarship commanded the respect of learned men. As with his friends the Wartons, his taste led him to the study of the older English writers. He was acquainted with the riches of the Elizabethan poets at a time when few English students strayed beyond Cowley; and he read in the Italian, French, and Spanish languages those poems and romances which, to the more sober taste of Johnson, "passed the bounds of nature." At this time he composed his Odes, upon which his fame rests. From the following letter he appears to

have originally designed to publish them in conjunction with poems of his schoolfellow Joseph Warton.

[May, 1746.]

“ DEAR TOM,

“ You will wonder to see my name in an advertisement next week, so I thought I would apprise you of it. The case was this. Collins met me in Surrey, at Guildford races, when I wrote out for him my odes, and he likewise communicated some of his to me; and being both in very high spirits, we took courage, resolved to join our forces, and to publish them immediately. I flatter myself that I shall lose no honour by this publication, because I believe these odes, as they now stand, are infinitely the best things I ever wrote. You will see a very pretty one of Collins's, on the Death of Colonel Ross* before Tournay. It is addressed to a lady who was Ross's intimate acquaintance, and who, by the way, is Miss Bett Goddard. Collins is not to publish the odes unless he gets ten guineas for them. I returned from Milford last night, where I left Collins with my mother and sister, and he sets out to-day for London. I must now tell you,

* Deaths. List of killed at Tournay, “ Capt. Ross, a fine young gentleman, member for the Shire of Ross.” *Gent. Mag.* 1745, p. 276.

that I have sent him your imitation of Horace's Blandusian Fountain, to be printed amongst ours, and which you shall own or not, as you think proper. I would not have done this without your consent, but because I think it very poetically and correctly done, and will get you honour.

" You will let me know what the Oxford critics say.

" Adieu, dear Tom,

" I am your most affectionate brother,

" J. WARTON."

The poem on Colonel Ross appeared in Dodsley's Museum for June 7, 1746, perhaps as a forerunner of the intended publication; but the shrewd judgment of Dodsley, no doubt, told him that the Odes of Collins were not in the taste of the day. No advertisement of this publication appeared in the newspapers; the joint project was certainly abandoned; and in December of that year Joseph Warton's Poems were published separately by Dodsley. Collins's Odes were published a few days after by Millar.* When

* They were dated, 1747. " This day are published, Price 1s. Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects," &c. " By William Collins. Printed for A. Millar in the Strand." Gen Advertiser, Saturday, Dec 20, 1746.

Langhorne, some years afterwards, brought a foolish charge against the bookseller of being only a favourer of genius when it had made its way to fame, it was replied, that Millar had purchased the copy at a very handsome price for those times, and, at his own expense and risk, did all in his power to introduce Collins to the notice of the public. As it appears from Joseph Warton's letter above quoted that Collins expected only ten guineas for the copyright, it is not probable that he received more than that sum. Twice as many copies were printed as had been printed of the "Persian Eclogues;"* but the public, who had shown some favour to the Eclogues, paid no attention to the Odes. A second edition of Warton's poems, now long forgotten, appeared in the following month; but the copies of the little book containing the "Ode to Evening" remained on the publisher's shelves. It is related by a good authority that Collins, in a fit of vexation, burnt with his own hand the copies which remained; but some of the poems were reprinted in the second edition of Dodsley's well-known Collection of Poems, published in 1748, with variations evidently from the hand of the author.

* "Dec. 15, 1746. Mr. Collins's Odes, 8vo. No. 1000, 3½ shts." Ledger of Woodfall the printer, quoted in Notes and Queries, vol. xi. p. 419.

Collins's Odes have always been the favourite of poets; and they won for him perhaps, even then, the praises he prized most. He formed an acquaintance with Thomson, and soon after took a lodging at Richmond, where Thomson resided, in the midst of that little knot of men of genius who enjoyed the precarious patronage of Frederick Prince of Wales. Mallet, and Quin, and Armstrong, and Collins's publisher, Millar, were of that roystering company who were accustomed to hold jovial meetings at the "Castle," until long after sober hours. Thomson appears to have been very intimate with Collins. He informed him that he took the hint of his Seasons from the titles to the four Pastorals of Pope. Warton was introduced by Collins to Thomson, who "discussed learnedly" with him on the Greek tragedies. Early in 1748, Thomson published the "Castle of Indolence," his last and most poetical work, the opening of which contained, avowedly, sketches of his associates. Among these is a portrait for which no satisfactory claim has been established; and which may well have been intended for Collins, who is described by Langhorne as being of "a fixed, sedate aspect," and whose habit of indulging in splendid projects must have been notorious among his friends:

Of all the gentle tenants of the place,
 There was a man of special grave remark ;
 A certain tender gloom o'erspread his face,
 Pensive, not sad, in thought involved, not dark.

* * * *

Ten thousand glorious systems would he build,
 Ten thousand great ideas filled his mind ;
 But with the clouds they fled, and left no trace behind.

But a gloom quickly overspread the faces of all those dreamers in the " Fairy Castle." The Prince, whose tastes and habits were coarse, and who had probably only patronized men of letters as a ground of distinction from the unlettered character of the King his father, quarrelled with his friend Lyttelton, the patron of Thomson. The pensions to Thomson, Mallet, and West were meanly withdrawn, and any hope which Collins may have had of favour vanished. A greater trouble befel them. In August, 1748, Thomson caught a fever and died suddenly, and Collins quitted Richmond. Soon afterwards he paid that tender and beautiful tribute to the poet's memory, the " Ode on the Death of Thomson," which he inscribed to Lyttelton, and published, in folio, in June of the following year.

Collins's uncle, Lieut. Col. Martyn, was wounded in the action of Val in Flanders, in 1747 and soon after returned to England. In 1749, he died in Chichester, in the house of his nieces Elizabeth and Anne Collins, to whom and

to the poet, he bequeathed the greater part of his property.* Collins's share is said to have been about £2000. A good authority states that the Lieutenant-Colonel's property, which he bequeathed to Collins and his sisters, amounted to "nearly £7000:" but the poet's share was sufficient, at all events, to rescue him from his embarrassments, and to secure him some degree of ease and leisure. It was a sum, says Johnson, who best knew the poet's character, "which Collins could hardly think exhaustible, and which he did not live to exhaust."

Collins appears at this time to have abandoned his town companions, and to have devoted himself to literary studies in his native city. He gathered together a library containing scarce and curious works, to which there are several references in his friend T. Warton's "History of Poetry." He, however, published nothing save the little "Dirge in Cymbeline," which appeared in the "Gentleman's Magazine" in October,

* The Lieutenant-Colonel appears to have raised himself above the position of his family. His niece Ann Collins, afterwards Mrs. Durnford, in her will, dated 1787, mentions "her nearest relations by her mother's [the Lieutenant-Colonel's sister's] side, viz. : William Martin, of Chichester, collar-maker, Martha Artlett, wife of John Artlett of Birdham, blacksmith, Jeremiah Swan, of Felp-ham, grocer," &c.

1749. In the autumn of that year, Home, the author of the tragedy of "Douglas," visited England to negotiate with Garrick for the performance of his celebrated play. Collins made his acquaintance during Home's brief stay in England at the house of their common friend Mr. Barrow at Winchester, where they remained on a visit for a week or two. Home returned to Scotland towards the end of the year, and Collins then addressed to him the "Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands." Home appears to have carried away with him an unfinished sketch of the poem, which, being found many years after Collins's death, was then first published in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. This publication was quickly followed by a complete edition, whose authenticity has been much disputed. The Wartons, however, had read and remembered the poem; and the anonymous editor dedicated the Ode to them, with an address. As this called forth no protest from the Wartons, it is to be presumed that they acknowledged the genuineness of the more perfect copy; and it has for that reason, though not without some hesitation, been adopted for the text of this edition.

* I cannot, it is true, claim great authority for the memory of Dr. Warton, who, in his Essay on Pope, informs

The following letter, the only one which has been found of Collins's, is interesting from the evidence which it affords of honour paid to him at Oxford.

“ TO DR. WILLIAM HAYES, PROFESSOR OF
• MUSIC, OXFORD.

“ SIR,

“ MR. BLACKSTONE of Winchester some time since informed me of the honour you had done me at Oxford last summer; for which I return you my sincere thanks. I have another more perfect copy of the Ode; which, had I known your obliging design, I would have communicated to you. Inform me by a line, if you should think one of my better judgment acceptable. In such case I could send you one written on a nobler subject; and which, though I have been persuaded to bring it forth in London, I think more calculated for an audience in the University. The subject is the Music of the Grecian Theatre; in which I have, I hope

us that Collins's uncle was Colonel Martin Bladen, who translated Cæsar's Commentaries, and was satirised by Pope in the Dunciad. Dr. Warton even reports, very circumstantially, an anecdote related by Collins concerning his uncle Bladen's intercourse with Voltaire: the fact being that the name of Collins's uncle was simply Martin, and not Martin Bladen, with whom he had no connection whatever.

naturally, introduced the various Characters with which the chorus was concerned, as Œdipus, Medea, Electra, Orestes, etc. etc. The composition, too, is probably more correct, as I have chosen the ancient tragedies for my models, and only copied the most affecting passages in them.

“ In the mean time, you would greatly oblige me by sending the score of the last. If you can get it written, I will readily answer the expense. If you send it with a copy or two of the Ode (as printed at Oxford) to Mr. Clarke, at Winchester, he will forward it to me here. I am, Sir,

“ With great respect,

“ Your obliged humble servant,

“ WILLIAM COLLINS.

“ Chichester, Sussex, November 8, 1750.”

“ P. S. Mr. Clarke past some days here while Mr. Worgan was with me; from whose friendship, I hope, he will receive some advantage.”

No trace of the “Ode on the Music of the Grecian Theatre” has ever been discovered. It is possible that Collins had done no more than sketch out a plan. Shortly before this, Collins had been in London, where his friend Warton frequently conversed with him on the subject of

his projected "History of the Revival of Learning," for which he appears to have been now collecting materials. He returned to Chichester, no doubt to be present at the marriage of his elder sister, Elizabeth Collins, which took place in October, 1750. She married Lieut. Nathaniel Tanner, an officer who had fought with Col. Martyn in all his campaigns in Scotland and Flanders, and was wounded at Fontenoy.

Collins never wholly abandoned his design of writing a "History of the Revival of Learning." Being now retired and freed from worldly anxieties, he appears to have devoted himself seriously to his task; but a calamity greater than poverty awaited him. The weakness and irresolution which had haunted him were probably early manifestations of that terrible disease which afterwards showed itself more openly. It is related by Johnson that Collins, perceiving the clouds gathering on his intellects, endeavoured to disperse them by travel, and passed into France for awhile. The date of this circumstance is uncertain. Johnson, it is true, informs us that he began to feel the approaches of his malady soon after his uncle's death, that his health from that time continually declined, and that he grew more and more burthensome to himself. But it is probable that his madness did

not become evident before the year 1753. After his return from France he removed to Bath; and in 1754 visited his friends at Oxford, where he remained a month. His friend T. Warton's memorandum of that visit will be afterwards inserted. It appears from Warton's account that he was at that time only weak and ^{low}, and unable to bear conversation; and Johnson, who never saw him after his calamity had assumed its worst form, speaks of it as "not alienation of mind, but general laxity and feebleness, a deficiency rather of his vital than intellectual powers." "What he spoke," says the same authority, "wanted neither judgment nor spirit; but a few minutes exhausted him, so that he was forced to rest upon the couch, till a short cessation restored his powers, and he was again able to talk with his former vigour." During this brief visit to Oxford his disease appears to have entered a darker phase; as is shown by the following letter which appeared anonymously in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1781. It is here printed from the original manuscript, addressed "For Mr. Urban. To the care of Mr. Newbery, at the Corner of St. Paul's Churchyard, London." The letter bears the "Alton" postmark, and is from the pen of Collins's college acquaintance Gilbert

White, the celebrated author of the “*Natural History of Selborne.*”

“ MR. URBAN,

“ WILLIAM COLLINS, the poet, I was intimately acquainted with, from the time that he came to reside at Oxford. He was the son of a tradesman at the city of Chichester, I think an latter; and being sent very young to Winchester school, was soon distinguished for his early proficiency, and his turn for elegant composition. About the year 1740, he came off from that seminary *first* upon roll,† and was entered a commoner of Queen’s college. There, no vacancy offering for New College, he remained a year or two, and then was chosen demy of Magdalen college; where, I think, he took a degree. As he brought with him, for so the whole turn of his conversation discovered, too high an opinion of his school acquisitions, and a sovereign contempt for all academic studies and discipline, he never looked

* The reader will be able to correct some errors of White’s narrative from the facts given in this memoir. A postscript is omitted, as having no reference to Collins.

† “ Mr. Joseph Warton, now Dr. Warton, head master of Winton school, was at the same time *second* upon roll; and Mr. Mulso, now [1781] prebendary of the church of Winton, *third* upon roll.” V.

with any complacency on his situation in the university, but was always complaining of the dulness of a college life. In short, he threw up his demyship, and, going to London, commenced a man of the town, spending his time in all the dissipation of Ranelagh, Vauxhall, and the play-houses; and was romantic enough to suppose that his superior abilities would draw the attention of the great world, by means of whom he was to make his fortune.

“ In this pleasurable way of life he soon wasted his little property, and a considerable legacy left him by a maternal uncle, a colonel in the army, to whom the nephew made a visit in Flanders during the war. While on this tour he wrote several entertaining letters to his Oxford friends, some of which I saw. In London I met him often, and remember he lodged in a little house with a Miss Bundy, at the corner of King’s-square-court, Soho, now a warehouse, for a long time together. When poverty overtook him, poor man, he had too much sensibility of temper to bear with his misfortunes, and so fell into a most deplorable state of mind. How he got down to Oxford, I do not know; but I myself saw him under Merton wall, in a very affecting situation, struggling, and conveyed by force, in the arms of two or three men, towards the parish

of St. Clement, in which was a house that took in such unhappy objects: and I always understood that, not long after, he died in confinement; but when, or where, or where he was buried, I never knew.

“ Thus was lost to the world this unfortunate person, in the prime of life, without availing himself of fine abilities, which, properly improved, must have raised him to the top of any profession, and have rendered him a blessing to his friends, and an ornament to his country.

“ Without books, or steadiness and resolution to consult them if he had been possessed of any, he was always planning schemes for elaborate publications, which were carried no farther than the drawing up proposals for subscriptions, some of which were published; and in particular, as far as I remember, one for a ‘ History of the Darker Ages.’

“ He was passionately fond of music; good natured and affable; warm in his friendships, and visionary in his pursuits; and, as long as I knew him, very temperate in his eating and drinking. He was of moderate stature, of a light and clear complexion, with grey eyes, so very weak at times as hardly to bear a candle in the room; and often raising within him apprehensions of blindness.

“ With an anecdote respecting him, while he was at Magdalen College, I shall close my letter. It happened one afternoon, at a tea visit, that several intelligent friends were assembled at his rooms to enjoy each other’s conversation, when in comes a member* of a certain college, as remarkable at that time for his brutal disposition as for his good scholarship; who, though he met with a circle of the most peaceable people in the world, was determined to quarrel; and, though no man said a word, lifted up his foot and kicked the tea-table, and all its contents, to the other side of the room. Our poet, though of a warm temper, was so confounded at the unexpected downfall, and so astonished at the unmerited insult, that he took no notice of the aggressor, but getting up from his chair calmly, he began picking up the slices of bread and butter, and the fragments of his china, repeating very mildly,

Invenias etiam disjecti membra poetæ.

“ I am your very humble Servant,

“ V.

“ Jan. 20, 1781.”

The next letter was found among the papers of Mr. William Hymers, of Queen’s College, Ox-

* “ The translator of Polybius.” [Hampton.] V.

ford, who circulated proposals, about 1783, for an edition of Collins's Works; but dying soon afterwards, was prevented from completing his design. This letter first appeared, according to Mr. Dyce, in the "Reaper," published in the "York Chronicle," and afterwards privately reprinted. It is here reprinted from the "Monthly Magazine," vol. xxi.

"Hill Street, Richmond in Surrey, July 1783.

"SIR,

"YOUR favour of the 30th June I did not receive till yesterday. The person who has the care of my house in Bond Street, expecting me there every day, did not send it to Richmond, or I would have answered sooner. As you express a wish to know every particular, however trifling, relating to Mr. William Collins, I will endeavour, so far as can be done by a letter, to satisfy you. There are many little anecdotes, which tell well enough in conversation, but would be tiresome for you to read, or me to write, so shall pass them over. I had formerly several scraps of his poetry, which were suddenly written on particular occasions. These I lent among our acquaintance, who were never civil enough to return them:

and being then engaged in extensive business, I forgot to ask for them, and they are lost: all I have remaining of his are about twenty lines, which would require a little history to be understood, being written on trifling subjects. I have a few of his letters, the subjects of which are chiefly on business, but I think there are in them some flights which strongly mark his character; for which reason I preserved them. There are so few of his intimates now living, that I believe I am the only one who can give a true account of his family and connexions. The principal part of what I write is from my own knowledge, or what I have heard from his nearest relations.

“ His father was not the manufacturer of hats, but the vender. He lived in a genteel style at Chichester; and, I think, filled the office of mayor more than once; he was pompous in his manner; but, at his death, he left his affairs rather embarrassed. Colonel Martyn, his wife’s brother greatly assisted his family, and supported Mr. William Collins at the university, where he stood for a fellowship, which, to his great mortification, he lost, and which was his reason for quitting that place, at least that was his pretext. But he had other reasons: he was in arrears to his bookseller, his tailor, and other tradesmen. But, I believe, a desire to partake

of the dissipation and gaiety of London was his principal motive.* Colonel Martyn was at this time with his regiment; and Mr. Payne, a near relation, who had the management of the colonel's affairs, had likewise a commission to supply the Collinses with small sums of money. The colonel was the more sparing in this order, having suffered considerably by Alderman Collins, who had formerly been his agent, and, forgetting that his wife's brother's cash was not his own, had applied it to his own use. When Mr. Wm. Collins came from the university, he called on his cousin Payne, gaily dressed, and with a feather in his hat; at which his relation expressed surprise, and told him his appearance was by no means that of a young man who had not a single guinea he could call his own. This gave him great offence; but remembering his sole dependence for subsistence was in the power of Mr. Payne, he concealed his resentment; yet could not refrain from speaking freely behind his back, and saying he thought him a d——d dull fellow; though, indeed, this was an epithet he was pleased

* See ante p. xvi. Another version may here be added on the authority of some "contemporaries of Collins" at Magdalen College. Collins, according to their account, offended his uncle Payne, fellow of the College, by "refusing to pay attention to him, and therefore left the University."—*Gents. Mag.* Oct. 1823.

to bestow on every one who did not think as he would have them. His frequent demands for a supply obliged Mr. Payne to tell him he must pursue some other line of life, for he was sure Colonel Martyn would be displeased with him for having done so much. This resource being stopped, forced him to set about some work, of which his History of the Revival of Learning was the first; and for which he printed proposals (one of which I have), and took the first subscription money from many of his particular friends: the work was begun but soon stood still. Both Dr. Johnson and Mr. Langhorne are mistaken when they say, the Translation of Aristotle was never begun: I know the contrary, for some progress was made in both, but most in the latter. From the freedom subsisting between us, we took the liberty of saying anything to each other. I one day reproached him with idleness; when, to convince me my censure was unjust, he showed me many sheets of his translation of Aristotle, which he said he had so fully employed himself about, as to prevent him calling on many of his friends so frequently as he used to do. Soon after this he engaged with Mr. Manby, a bookseller on Ludgate Hill, to furnish him with some Lives for the Biographia Britannica, which Manby was then publishing.

He showed me some of the lives in embryo; but I do not recollect that any of them came to perfection. To raise a present subsistence he set about writing his Odes; and, having a general invitation to my house, he frequently passed whole days there, which he employed in writing them, and as frequently burning what he had written, after reading them to me: many of them, which pleased me, I struggled to preserve, but without effect; for, pretending he would alter them, he got them from me, and thrust them into the fire. He was an acceptable companion everywhere; and, among the gentlemen who loved him for a genius, I may reckon the Doctors Armstrong, Barrowby, and Hill, Messrs. Quin, Garrick, and Foote, who frequently took his opinion on their pieces before they were seen by the public. He was particularly noticed by the geniuses who frequented the Bedford and Slaughter's Coffee Houses. From his knowledge of Garrick he had the liberty of the scenes and green-room, where he made diverting observations on the vanity and false consequence of that class of people; and his manner of relating them to his particular friends was extremely entertaining. In this manner he lived, with and upon his friends, until the death of Colonel Martyn, who left what fortune he died possessed of unto

him and his two sisters. I fear I cannot be certain as to dates, but believe he left the university in the year '43. Some circumstances I recollect, make me almost certain he was in London that year; but I will not be so certain of the time he died, which I did not hear of till long after it happened. When his health and faculties began to decline, he went to France, and after to Bath, in hope his health might be restored, but without success. I never saw him after his sister removed him from Mc'Donald's madhouse at Chelsea to Chichester, where he soon sunk into a deplorable state of idiotism, which, when I was told, shocked me exceedingly; and, even now, the remembrance of a man for whom I had a particular friendship, and in whose company I have passed so many pleasant happy hours, gives me a severe shock. Since it is in consequence of your own request, Sir, that I write this long farrago, I expect you will overlook all inaccuracies. I am, Sir,

“ Your very humble Servant,

“ JOHN RAGSDALE.

“ Mr. Wm. Hymers, Queen's College, Oxford.”

Like the preceding letter, the following particulars communicated by T. Warton to Mr.

Hymers appeared originally in the "Reaper," whence they were copied by Dr. Drake into the "Gleaner." A few passages are omitted.

"I often saw Collins in London in 1750. This was before his illness. He then told me of his intended history of the Revival of Learning, and proposed a scheme of a review, to be called the Clarendon Review, and to be printed at the university press, under the conduct and authority of the university. About Easter, the next year, I was in London; when, being given over and supposed to be dying, he desired to see me, that he might take his last leave of me; but he grew better; and in the summer he sent me a letter on some private business, which I have now by me, dated Chichester, June 9, 1751, written in fine hand, and without the least symptom of a disordered or debilitated understanding. In 1754, he came to Oxford for change of air and amusement, where he stayed a month; I saw him frequently, but he was so weak and low, that he could not bear conversation. Once he walked from his lodgings, opposite Christ Church, to Trinity College, but supported by his servant. The same year, in September, I and my brother visited him at Chichester, where he lived, in the cathedral cloisters, with his sister. The first day he was

in high spirits at intervals, but exerted himself so much that he could not see us the second. Here he showed us an Ode to Mr. John Home, on his leaving England for Scotland, in the octave stanza, very long, and beginning,

Home, thou return'st from Thames.

“ I remember there was a beautiful description of the spectre of a man drowned in the night, or, in the language of the old Scotch superstitions, seized by the angry spirit of the waters, appearing to his wife with pale blue cheek, &c. Mr. Home has no copy of it. He also showed us another ode, of two or three four-lined stanzas, called the Bell of Arragon; on a tradition that, anciently, just before a king of Spain died, the great bell of the cathedral of Sarragossa, in Arragon, tolled spontaneously. It began thus:—

The bell of Arragon, they say,
Spontaneous speaks the fatal day, &c.

Soon afterwards were these lines:—

Whatever dark ærial power,
Commissioned, haunts the gloomy tower.

The last stanza consisted of a moral transition to his own death and knell, which he called ‘some simpler bell.’ I have seen all his odes already published in his own hand writing; they had the

marks of repeated correction : he was perpetually changing his epithets. * * * Dr. Warton, my brother, has a few fragments of some other odes, but too loose and imperfect for publication, yet containing traces of high imagery.

* * * * *

“ In illustration of what Dr. Johnson has related, that during his last malady he was a great reader of the Bible, I am favoured with the following anecdote from the Rev. Mr. Shenton, Vicar of St. Andrew's, at Chichester, by whom Collins was buried : ‘ Walking in my vicarial garden one Sunday evening, during Collins's last illness, I heard a female (the servant, I suppose) reading the Bible in his chamber. Mr. Collins had been accustomed to rave much, and make great moanings ; but while she was reading, or rather attempting to read, he was not only silent but attentive likewise, correcting her mistakes, which indeed were very frequent, through the whole of the twenty-seventh chapter of Genesis.’ I have just been informed, from undoubted authority, that Collins had finished a Preliminary Dissertation to be prefixed to his History of the Restoration of Learning, and that it was written with great judgment, precision, and knowledge of the subject.

“ T. W.”

Collins was finally removed to Chichester, in the year 1754, where he remained under the care of his sister Anne, who had become the wife of Captain Sempill. Here, he appears, from Warton's communication above quoted, to have partially recovered; and even now, although weak and low, and unable to bear even the excitement of a visit from his old friends, his recovery appears not to have been despaired of. There were still hopes that he would finish his great work—"the History of the Revival of Learning," or "of the Age of Leo the Tenth." It was the intention of the Wartons and their literary friends to give "a History of the Revival of Letters," not only in Italy, but in all the countries of Europe. Warton's "History of English Poetry," and Collins's projected work were intended to form part of that great design. Dr. J. Warton, in his "Essay on Pope," published in 1756, evidently refers to Collins's work, in a passage which is interesting from the glimpse which it gives of its design, and the evidence which it affords that, even at that time, the task was not abandoned, nor its completion considered hopeless. "Concerning the particular encouragement given by Leo X. to polite Literature and the Fine Arts," says Dr. Warton, "I for-

bear to enlarge, because a friend of mine is at present engaged in writing the ‘History of the Age of Leo X.’ It is a noble period, and full of those most important events which have had the greatest influence on human affairs; such as the discovery of the West Indies by the Spaniards, and of a passage to the East by the Portuguese; the invention of printing, the reformation of Religion, with many others, all which will be insisted upon at large, and their consequences displayed.”

The tenderness with which Johnson always regarded Collins is beautifully exemplified by the following extracts from his letters to Joseph Warton.

“ March 8, 1754.

“ But how little can we venture to exult in any intellectual powers or literary attainments when we consider the condition of poor Collins. I knew him a few years ago, full of hopes and full of projects, versed in many languages, high in fancy, and strong in retention. This busy and forcible mind is now under the government of those who lately would not have been able to comprehend the least and most narrow of its designs. What do you hear of him? are there hopes of his recovery? or is he to pass the remainder of his life in misery and degradation?

perhaps with complete consciousness of his calamity."

" Dec. 24th, 1754. .

" Poor dear Collins! Let me know whether you think it would give him pleasure if I should write to him. I have often been near his state, and therefore have it in great commiseration."

" April 15th, 1756.

" What becomes of poor dear Collins? I wrote him a letter which he never answered. I suppose writing is very troublesome to him. That man is no common loss. The moralists all talk of the uncertainty of fortune, and the transitoriness of beauty; but it is yet more dreadful to consider that the powers of the mind are equally liable to change, that understanding may make its appearance and depart, that it may blaze and expire."

In this low and melancholy condition, though probably not wholly deprived of his faculties, Collins continued for five years. In January, 1757, his "Persian Eclogues" were republished by Payne, with the title of "Oriental Eclogues," and with corrections and alterations evidently from the poet's own hand. This was his last

publication. He died at Chichester, in the arms of his sister, on the 12th of June, 1759, and in the thirty-ninth year of his age. "Such," says Johnson, "was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converse, and whom I yet remember with tenderness." The world from which he had retired had already forgotten him. "The neglected author of the Persian Eclogues," says Goldsmith, in his Enquiry into the State of Learning, "which, however inaccurate, excel any in our language, is still alive; happy if insensible of our neglect, not raging at our ingratitude." The praise of Goldsmith had not then the value in men's eyes which it afterwards possessed: but it is doubtful if Collins ever read this token of his future fame. Goldsmith's "Essay" was not published until April, 1759—two months only before Collins's decease. No newspaper or magazine of the time records the poet's death: so little trace had his later years left in the minds of his most intimate friends, that Johnson, who consulted with the Wartons, when writing his "Memoir of Collins," describes his death as having taken place in 1756, three years before the fact. He was buried in the Church of St. Andrew at Chichester, on the 15th of June, 1759. His name has long since been added to the list of unfortunate men of

genius. It is remarkable that Chatterton, with whom Collins has been so long associated on that melancholy roll, and who has been said to have imitated Collins in one of his African Eclogues, more than once mentions the poetry of Collins in terms of contempt. In 1789, a subscription was first invited for the monument to Collins, supported by the Rev. Mr. Walker of Chichester. The writer is kindly informed by Dr. Bloxam, that Magdalen College subscribed liberally towards the object. The monument was executed by Flaxman. The poet is represented at full length, sitting with a book opened before him. The inscription, which was written by the poet Hayley and Mr. John Sargent, is as follows :—

“ Ye who the merits of the dead revere,
Who hold misfortune sacred, genius dear,
Regard this tomb, where Collins, hapless name,
Solicits kindness with a double claim.
Though nature gave him, and though science taught
The fire of fancy, and the reach of thought,
Severely doomed to penury's extreme,
He pass'd in maddening pain life's feverish dream.
While rays of genius only served to show
The thickening horror, and exalt his woe.
Ye walls that echoed to his frantic moan,
Guard the due records of this grateful stone ;
Strangers to him, enamoured of his lays,
This fond memorial to his talents raise.
For this the ashes of a bard require,
Who touched the tenderest notes of pity's lyre ;

Who joined pure faith to strong poetic powers ;
 Who, in reviving reason's lucid hours,
 Sought on one book his troubled mind to rest,
 And rightly deemed the book of God the best."

No portrait of Collins is known to exist, save the little drawing a copy of which is prefixed to this edition. His appearance has been variously described. Johnson speaks of it as "decent," (which in his Latinized vocabulary probably meant "graceful" and "manly.") The "contemporaries of Collins," previously alluded to (p. xxxvi.) describe him as a "pock-fretted man with small keen black eyes," and add, that he "associated very little." They were speaking, however, many years after his decease; and many more after he left the college. Langhorne says that he was "in stature somewhat above the middle size; of a 'brown'* complexion, keen expressive eyes, and a fixed sedate aspect, which from intense thinking had contracted an habitual frown." It is improbable, however, that Langhorne could have seen Collins; and his

* In Langhorne's time the term "brown" was applied to what is now called a "dark" person, as is still the case in the French language. So in Gay's line describing Pope's friends the Blounts—

"The fair-haired Martha, and Teresa brown;"
 where, strange as it may now sound, "brown" doubtless stood for "dark-haired."

account does not agree with that of the poet's friend Gilbert White, who describes him as "of a moderate stature, of a light and clear complexion, with grey eyes, so very weak at times as hardly to bear a candle in the room." The same authority, though relating an anecdote evidencing an imperturbable good humour, speaks of him as possessing a "warm temper," but generally as "good natured and affable; warm in his friendships, and very temperate." His knowledge, says Johnson, was "considerable, his views extensive, his conversation elegant, and his disposition cheerful;" and in the following passage he hints at other lights and shades in his character. "His morals were pure, and his opinions pious. In a long continuance of poverty, and long habits of dissipation, it cannot be expected that any character should be exactly uniform. There is a degree of want by which the freedom of agency is almost destroyed; and long association with fortuitous companions will at last relax the strictness of truth, and abate the fervour of sincerity. That this man, wise and virtuous as he was, passed always unentangled through the snares of life, it would be prejudice and temerity to affirm; but it may be said, that at least, he preserved the source of action unpolluted, that his principles were never shaken,

that his distinctions of right and wrong were never confounded, and that his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure or casual temptation." Johnson's brief memoir will ever be admired for its suggestiveness, and for a pathos too deep to be concealed by the writer's stateliness of diction. It records a friendship of rare sincerity and tenderness. Concerning his criticism on Collins's poetry much has been said by the poet's admirers. Some have been angry at its injustice, and others have wondered at the strange inconsistency of his love for the poet and the harshness of his strictures on his poems. The following passage upon Collins and his friends, by a recent writer, may here be appropriately quoted.

"What anecdote could be more affecting or suggestive than that which Johnson has told us—that Collins, perceiving 'the clouds gathering on his intellects,' endeavoured to dispel them by travel, and departed with his terrible secret into France. What were his sufferings in that hopeless and solitary journey—what shadowy companions, haunting him wheresoever he fled, compelled him at length to yield and to return, no biographer can ever tell us! Johnson had not—could not have—much feeling for the peculiar beauties of Collins's poetry. Collins and

the Wartons—his companions and friends from boyhood—belonged to a new movement in literature, which to Johnson, familiar only with the Latin poets and the writings of his immediate predecessors, was a heresy, a deviation in quest of mistaken beauties, an unworthy revival of the obsolete. Warton's three quarto volumes of his 'History of English Poetry,' in which he frequently refers to scarce copies of ancient poems which had belonged to Collins, did not bring him down even to the earliest name in the collection of poets identified with Johnson—a literary Pre-Raphaelism which not even his regard for Warton could induce him to forgive. Johnson's satire on Warton's poems is well known :—

‘ All is strange, yet nothing new ;
Endless labour all along,
Endless labour to be wrong.
Phrase that time has flung away,
Uncouth words in disarray,
Tricked in antique ruff and bonnet,
Ode and elegy and sonnet.’

A whisper of this satire is said to have been the cause of their final estrangement ; but it should never be forgotten that when Johnson read these lines in *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Piozzi, he prefaced them by saying, “ remember that I love the

fellow dearly,* for all that I laugh at him." Herein we find a clue to that strange woof of tenderness and censure—his memoir of Collins; but it is not difficult to perceive that he remembered his friend's powers with a secret veneration. He would have no man think lightly of him, or believe that it was not immeasurably better to have his errors than to be without his genius. He dwells with pride upon his acquaintance with the learned tongues, with the Italian, French, and Spanish languages. With evident partiality he pictures to the reader his manly exterior, his extensive views, his elegant conversation, his cheerful disposition. In spite of his prejudices, and of his peculiar habit of neutralizing praise as soon as he has ventured to bestow it, it is evident that the irresolute idler, the associate of chance companions, the harassed fugitive from duns and bailiffs, was to him an object of wonder and admiration, a seer of genii and fairies, a dweller in palaces of enchantment, a wanderer 'by waterfalls in Elysian gardens.' Above all, he is sure that in spite of habits of dissipation, of long-continued poverty and its evil influences, the moral character of his friend was always pure, and his principles never shaken."*

* Athenæum, Jan. 5, 1856.

The names of succeeding writers who have recorded their admiration of Collins would form an illustrious roll; but he cannot be said to be a popular poet. His lofty imagery, his love of allegory, and splendid visions, conspicuous in the "Ode to the Passions," the "Ode on the Poetical Character," and the "Ode to Liberty," are not poetry of that kind, which, touching all humanity, is remembered and stored up by all. We may except the "Ode on the Death of Thomson," which is generally admired for its meditative tenderness and repose. His "Ode to Evening" is, perhaps, the most original of his odes. The fine tone of tranquil musing that pervades it is felt by every poetic reader. A subdued and peaceful spirit breathes through it, as in the solitude and stillness of a twilight country. The absence of rhyme leaving the even flow of the verse unbroken, and the change at the end of each stanza into shorter lines, as if the voice of the reader dropped into a lower key, contribute to the effect. To those who feel its spirit the living world is far away, and even the objects in the surrounding landscape, by which the picture is completed, are seen only in their reflections in the poet's mind. The bat and the beetle which are abroad in the dusky air; the brown hamlets and dim-discovered spires; the springs that have

a solemn murmur, and the dying gales, are but images of that rapt and peaceful mood. It must, however, be acknowledged that some obscurity in the invocation arises from the long inversion of the sense, by which that which in logical order is the first sentence in the poem is carried over to the last two lines of the fourth stanza. The Horatian unrhymed metre in which it is composed has been often imitated in English, and, it is said, that Collins contemplated writing other poems in the same stanza; but the experiment has rarely been successful. Milton's translation of the 5th Ode of Horace, Book I., is, perhaps, the earliest specimen of the unrhymed ode in English. T. Warton mentions an "elegant Ode," by Capt. Thomas of Christ Church, Oxford, in this measure; but appears to have forgotten that his own father had also adopted it for a poem published in his works. J. Warton's poems, published at the same time as Collins's, contain also an unrhymed "Ode to Content," which is interesting from their early association in poetical studies. The following two stanzas may serve as a specimen of this poem:—

Meek virgin, wilt thou deign with me to sit,
In pensive pleasure, by my glimmering fire,
And with calm smile despise
The loud world's distant din?

As from the piny mountain's topmost cliff,
 Some wandering hermit sage hears unconcerned,
 Far in the vale below,
 The thundering torrent burst.

The "Oriental Eclogues," by which Goldsmith remembered Collins, and which Collins is said to have been annoyed to find were better read than his Odes, contain lines more open to Johnson's criticisms than any others of his poems. In such passages as :—

My feet deny,
 No longer friendly to my life, to fly ;

it is impossible not to feel the "clusters of consonants;" but the "Persian Eclogues" have much of the rich and peculiar diction of Collins. He is said, on more than one authority, to have expressed his dissatisfaction with them, by calling them his "Irish Eclogues;" but in this he no doubt simply referred to some remarkable blunders in his first edition. By a fiction in the preface, the Eclogues are stated to have been written in Persian by Abdallah, a native of Tauris: but before the poet had reached the end of his first Eclogue, he had so far forgotten his assumed character as to write the line :—

When sweet and odorous, like an eastern bride ;

and again :—

Thus sung the swain, and *eastern* legends say,
The maids of Bagdat, &c.

These and one or two other similar accidents of a less important nature, as in the line in which the diamonds of Balsora are said to “sparkle *to the sight*,” no doubt, were the cause of the poet’s calling them his “Irish Eclogues.” Sir Harris Nicolas defends “The Epistle to Sir Thomas Hanmer” against the poet’s most rapturous critic, Dr. Langhorne, but does not state his reasons for objecting to Langhorne’s preference for the Odes. It is impossible, however, not to feel, with Sir Harris Nicolas, that the Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands has not received full justice from the critics of the poet. Traces of Milton’s “Il Penseroso” are evident in it, and the spirit of the “Midsummer Night’s Dream,” mingles with the more cruel and mystic superstition of the north :—

Let not dank Will mislead you to the heath ;
Dancing in mirky night o’er fen and lake,
He glows, to draw you downward to your death
In his bewitched, low, marshy, willow brake !

Some particulars of Collins and his family, which could not be inserted earlier without interrupting our narrative, may here be added. The following anecdote is given on the authority

of Mr. Crowe, who derived the story from a friend of Dr. Busby, who received it from Mr. Smith. "The boys on the foundation at Winchester College are lodged in seven chambers. Collins belonged to the same chamber with William Smith of Chichester, afterwards Treasurer of the Ordnance, by whom he was observed one morning to be particularly depressed and melancholy. Being pressed to disclose the cause, he at last said it was in consequence of a dream; for this he was laughed at, but desired to tell what it was. He said he dreamed that he was walking in the fields where there was a lofty tree: that he climbed it; and when he had nearly reached the top, a great branch, upon which he had got, failed with him, and let him fall to the ground. This account caused more ridicule; and he was asked how he could possibly be affected by this common consequence of a schoolboy adventure, when he did not pretend, even in imagination and sleep, to have received any hurt, he replied that the tree was the Tree of Poetry. The first time that Mr. Smith saw him after they had left the college was at an interval of twelve or fourteen years, and when, in a deplorable state of mind, he had been long under confinement; but no sooner had his old schoolfellow on this occasion presented himself, than he exclaimed,

‘Smith, do you remember my dream?’” It must be acknowledged that the poet’s dream had more of method and significance than dreams generally have.

The following six lines, a fragment of a poem by Collins, on a quack doctor in Chichester, are interesting, as the only specimen of a lively kind of verse which he has left. They were probably written by him when young :—

Seventh son of doctor John,
Physician and surgeon,
Who hath travelled wide and far,
Man-midwife to a man of war,
In Chichester hath ta’en a house,
Hippocrates, Hippocratous.

Mr. Seward, who quotes these lines as still remembered in that city, tells us also (Supp. to Anecdotes of Disting. Persons) that Collins “was extremely attached to a young lady who was born the day before him, and who did not return his passion with equal ardour,” and that he said on that occasion “that he came into the world a day after the *fair*.” In a previous version, by the same writer, the fact of Collins entering a certain town a day after a lady is said to have given rise to the poem. This has been supposed

* A popular proverb assigns, as an hereditary right to all seventh sons, the name of Septimus and the profession of a surgeon.

to refer to Miss Elizabeth Goddard^c, the intended bride of Colonel Ross, to whom Collins addressed his ode on the death of that officer at Fontenoy,—a lady who then lived, according to T. Warton, at or near Harting, in Sussex. If Warton's recollection were correct, the poem originally contained the line "If drawn by all a *lover's* art:" but if Collins had been really in love with the lady, it is difficult to believe that he would have addressed to her a poem of condolence on the death of his rival. Mrs. Barbauld remarks that, in the "Ode to the Passions," "Love, all-powerful love, is only mentioned incidentally."

Some account has already been given of the poet's family.* According to Dallaway (Western Sussex, vol. i.) they had been established in Chichester in the sixteenth century as "trades-

* The following notices of the poet, and other persons of his name, are extracted from the Burrell papers in the British Museum, [Add. MSS., Nos. 5697 to 5699.]:—

REGISTER OF ST. ANDREW'S, CHICHESTER.

BAPTISM.

Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. George Collins, 8th October, 1673.

BURIALS.

Mrs. Eliz. Collins [the poet's mother], 6th July, 1744.
Wm. Collins, Gent. [the Poet], 15th June, 1759.

men of the higher order." Thomas Collins, who served the office of Mayor in 1619, and apparently again in 1631 and 1646, is by the same

REGISTER OF ST. PETER THE GREAT,
CHICHESTER.

BAPTISMS.

Vicar Choral, Charles, son of Roger Collins, 8th February, 1665.

George, son of Mr. George Collins, 28th December, 1647.

Humphrey, son of Mr. Richard Collins, 20th Dec., 1648.

Geo., son of Mr. Geo. Collens, 7th September, 1651.

Christian, daughter of Mr. Rd. Collins, 1st Sept., 1652.

John, son of Mr. Richard Collins, senior, 13th Dec., 1652.

Eliz., daughter of Mr. Rd. Collens, sen., 16th May, 1656.

Joan, d. of Mr. Rd. Collins, jun., 12th Dec., 1656.

Judith, d. of Mr. Collins, Vic. Chor., 17th April, 1667.

Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. William Collins, 6th March, 1704, [the poet's sister]

Jn., s. of Mr. Collins, Apr. 13th, 1669.

MARRIAGES.

Mr. Ch. Collins and Mrs. Eliz. Cardiff, 14th April, 1696.

Mr. Rd. Collins and Mrs. Frs. Pexley, Wid. Nov. 3rd, 1659.

BURIALS.

———wife of Mr. Wm. Collins, 10th December, 1650.

Susan, wife of Mr. Richard Collens, 3rd December, 1657.

Mr. Geo. Collins, 10th January, 1669.

Mrs. Collins of St. Olave's Parish, 19th July, 1696.

Mr. Rd. Collins, jun. Dec. 2, 1669.

There are monumental inscriptions in St. Andrew's Church, Chichester, to the poet's father, mother, maternal uncle, Colonel Martin, and sister, Mrs. Durnford.

authority said to have been the "immediate ancestor" of the poet. Collins's maternal uncle, who died in 1749, bequeathed to his niece Elizabeth, the wife of Thomas Napper, of Itchenor, £100, and to his nephew, Abraham Martin, the youngest son of his late only brother Henry Martin, his copyhold estates in the Manors of Selsey and Somerly in that county; the residue he bequeathed to the poet and his two sisters, Elizabeth and Ann Collins. Of these two sisters Elizabeth, the elder, married, as already stated, Lieut. Tanner, in 1750. She being then in her forty-seventh year, made a will about the same time, bequeathing the whole of her property, in case of her having no children, to be divided between her sister and her brother, the poet, on the death of her husband. She died, in 1754, in Scotland; but her husband, who married again, survived until 1767. Ann Collins, the younger sister, married, for the first time, equally late in life, Lieut. Hugh Sempill, third son of Hugh, eleventh Lord Sempill. He obtained a company in the Marine Forces in 1757, and died, on board the Lennox man-of-war at the Cape of Good Hope, in January, 1764. Though advanced in life, she married again; her second husband being the Rev. Dr. Thomas Durnford, Rector of Brandean, and Prebendary of Itchin Abbots

in the county of Southampton, a widower. Mrs. Durnford died at Chichester, on the 18th of Oct. 1789, aged 85. Mr. Dyce quotes the following account of this lady from a manuscript note of Mr. T. Park, in his copy of Collins's poems in the possession of Mr. Mitford.

“The Reverend Mr. Durnford, who resided at Chichester, and was the son of Dr. D., informed me, in August 1795, that the sister of Collins loved money to excess, and evinced so outrageous an aversion to her brother, because he squandered or gave away to the boys in the cloisters whatever money he had, that she destroyed, in a paroxysm of resentment, all his papers, and whatever remained of his enthusiasm for poetry, as far as she could. Mr. Hayley told me, when I visited him at Earham, that he had obtained from her a small drawing by Collins; but it possessed no other value than as a memorial that the bard had attempted to handle the pencil as well as the pen.”

The fact that Mrs. Durnford appears from her will to have quarrelled with and separated from her second husband, renders it unfair to accept, without doubt, the evidence of his son as to her treatment of the poet. It appears, however, from the document referred to, that she was at least eccentric in pecuniary matters; for although she

bequeaths considerable property, she directs her executors to pay all debts due from her in the books of tradesmen, or for attendance, or otherwise, for which she had given her promissory note or other security, and also bequeaths a legacy to her attorney, on the ground of his having done business for her for which she had been unable to discharge his bill. Her death is thus recorded in the Register of the Gentleman's Magazine for 1789. "At Chichester, Mrs. Durnford, wife of Rev. Dr. Durnford." She was the sister and only surviving relation of William Collins the poet, who expired in her arms, 1756 [1759]."

Tradition points to the house numbered 21 in East-Street, Chichester, as the house in which Collins was born, and in which his father carried on his business of a hatter. This house was certainly at one time the property of the family. In May, 1747, the poet and his sisters, as devisees of their father, sold this house to Mr. William Croucher, from whom, after several changes, it passed into the possession of Mr. Mason, bookseller, the present occupier. The poet's signature is affixed to the original deed of sale.

ORIENTAL ECLOGUES.

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT
OF THE LADIES OF TAURIS.
AND NOW TRANSLATED.

——Ubi primus equis oriens adflavit anhelis.

VIRG. GEORG. LIB. 1.

THE first Edition was entitled, "Persian Eclogues, written originally for the Entertainment of the Ladies of Tauris. And now first translated, &c.

"Quod si non hic tantus fractus ostenderetur, et si ex his studiis delectatio sola peteretur; tamen, ut opinor, hanc animi remissionem humanissimam ac liberalissimam judicareus. CIC. *pro Arch. Poeta.*"



THE PREFACE.

IT is with the writings of mankind, in some measure, as with their complexions or their dress; each nation hath a peculiarity in all these, to distinguish it from the rest of the world.

The gravity of the Spaniard, and the levity of the Frenchman, are as evident in all their productions as in their persons themselves; and the style of my countrymen is as naturally strong and nervous, as that of an Arabian or Persian is rich and figurative.

There is an elegance and wildness of thought which recommends all their compositions; and our geniuses are as much too cold for the entertainment of such sentiments, as our climate is for their fruits and spices. If any of these beauties are to be found in the following Eclogues, I hope my reader will consider them as an argument of their being original. I received them at the hands of a merchant, who had made it his business to enrich himself with the learning, as

well as the silks and carpets of the Persians. The little information I could gather concerning their author, was, that his name was Abdallah, and that he was a native of Tauris.

It was in that city that he died of a distemper fatal in those parts, whilst he was engaged in celebrating the victories of his favourite monarch, the great Abbas.* As to the Eclogues themselves, they give a very just view of the miseries and inconveniences, as well as the felicities, that attend one of the finest countries in the East.

The time of writing them was probably in the beginning of Sha Sultan Hosseyn's reign, the successor of Sefi or Solyman the second.

Whatever defects, as, I doubt not, there will be many, fall under the reader's observation, I hope his candour will incline him to make the following reflection :

That the works of Orientals contain many peculiarities, and that, through defect of language, few European translators can do them justice.

* In the Persian tongue, Abbas signifieth " the father of the people."



ECLOGUE THE FIRST.

SELIM; OR, THE SHEPHERD'S MORAL.

SCENE, A valley near Bagdat.

TIME, The morning.

YE Persian maids, attend your poet's
lays,
And hear how shepherds pass their
golden days.

Not all are blest, whom fortune's hand sustains
With wealth in courts, nor all that haunt the plains:
Well may your hearts believe the truths I tell; s
Tis virtue makes the bliss, where'er we dwell.

Thus Selim sung, by sacred truth inspired;
Nor praise, but such as truth bestowed, desired:
Wise in himself, his meaning songs conveyed
Informing morals to the shepherd maid; 10

VARIATION.

Ver. 8. No praise the youth, but hers alone desired:

Or taught the swains that surest bliss to find,
 What groves nor streams bestow, a virtuous mind.

When sweet and blushing, like a virgin bride,
 The radiant morn resumed her orient pride ;
 When wanton gales along the valleys play, 15
 Breathe on each flower, and bear their sweets
 away ;

By Tigris' wandering waves he sat, and sung
 This useful lesson for the fair and young.

‘ Ye Persian dames,’ he said, ‘ to you belong—
 Well may they please—the morals of my song :
 No fairer maids, I trust, than you are found, 21
 Graced with soft arts, the peopled world around !
 The morn that lights you, to your loves supplies
 Each gentler ray delicious to your eyes : 24
 For you those flowers her fragrant hands bestow ;
 And yours the love that kings delight to know.
 Yet think not these, all beauteous as they are,
 The best kind blessings heaven can grant the fair !
 Who trust alone in beauty's feeble ray
 Boast but the worth ^aBalsora's pearls display : 30

VARIATIONS.

Ver. 13. When sweet and odorous like an eastern bride,

30. Balsora's pearls have more of worth than they :

31. Drawn from the deep, they sparkle to the sight,
 And all-unconscious shoot a lustrous light .

* The gulf of that name, famous for the pearl fishery. C.

Drawn from the deep we own their surface bright,
 But, dark within, they drink no lustrous light :
 Such are the maids, and such the charms they
 By sense unaided, or to virtue lost. [boast,
 Self-flattering sex ! your hearts believe in vain
 That love shall blind, when once he fires, the
 swain ; 36

Or hope a lover by your faults to win,
 As spots on ermine beautify the skin :
 Who seeks secure to rule, be first her care
 Each softer virtue that adorns the fair ; 40
 Each tender passion man delights to find,
 The loved perfections of a female mind !

‘ Blest were the days when wisdom held her
 reign,
 And shepherds sought her on the silent plain !
 With truth she wedded in the secret grove, 45
 Immortal truth, and daughters blessed their love.
 O haste, fair maids ! ye virtues, come away !
 Sweet peace and plenty lead you on your way !
 The balmy shrub, for you shall love our shore,
 By Ind excelled, or Araby, no more. ‘ 50

‘ Lost to our fields, for so the fates ordain,
 The dear deserters shall return again.

VARIATION.

Ver. 46. The fair-eyed truth, and daughters blessed
 their love.

Come thou, whose thoughts as limpid springs
 are clear,
 To lead the train, sweet modesty, appear :
 Here make thy court amidst our rural scene, 55
 And shepherd girls shall own thee for their queen :
 With thee be chastity, of all afraid,
 Distrusting all, a wise suspicious maid,
 But man the most :—not more the mountain doe
 Holds the swift falcon for her deadly foe. 60
 Cold is her breast, like flowers that drink the
 dew ;
 A silken veil conceals her from the view.
 No wild desires amidst thy train be known ;
 But faith, whose heart is fixed on one alone :
 Desponding meekness, with her downcast eyes,
 And friendly pity, full of tender sighs ; 66
 And love the last : by these your hearts approve ;
 'These are the virtues that must lead to love.'

Thus sung the swain ; and ancient legends say
 The maids of Bagdat verified the lay : 70
 Dear to the plains, the virtues came along,
 The shepherds loved, and Selim blessed his song.


VARIATIONS.

- . Ver. 53. O come, thou modesty, as they decree,
 The rose may then improve her blush by thee.
 69. Thus sung the swain, and eastern legends say

ECLOGUE THE SECOND.

HASSAN; OR, THE CAMEL DRIVER.

SCENE, The desert. TIME, Mid-day.

 IN silent horror o'er the boundless waste
The driver Hassan with his camels
past :

One cruise of water on his back he bore,
And his light scrip contained a scanty store ;
A fan of painted feathers in his hand, 5
To guard his shaded face from scorching sand.
The sultry sun had gained the middle sky,
And not a tree, and not an herb was nigh ;
The beasts with pain their dusty way pursue ; 9
Shrill roared the winds, and dreary was the view !
With desperate sorrow wild, the affrighted man
Thrice sighed, thrice struck his breast, and thus
began :

‘ Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
‘ When first from Schiraz’ walls I bent my way !’

VARIATION.

Ver. 1. In silent horror o’er the desert waste

‘ Ah ! little thought I of the blasting wind, 15
The thirst, or pinching hunger, that I find !
Bethink thee, Hassan, where shall thirst assuage,
When fails this cruise, his unrelenting rage ?
Soon shall this scrip its precious load resign ; 19
Then what but tears and hunger shall be thine ?

‘ Ye mute companions of my toils, that bear
In all my griefs a more than ‘equal share !
Here, where no springs in murmurs break away,
Or moss-crowned fountains mitigate the ‘day,
In vain ye hope the green delights to know, 25
Which plains more blest, or verdant vales bestow :
Here rocks alone, and tasteless sands, are found,
And faint and sickly winds for ever howl around.

‘ Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
‘ When first from Schiraz’ walls I bent my way !’

‘ Curst be the gold and silver which persuade
Weak men to follow far fatiguing trade !
The lily peace outshines the silver store,
And life is dearer than the golden ore :
Yet money tempts us o’er the desert brown, 35
To every distant mart and wealthy town.
Full oft we tempt the land, and oft the sea ;
And are we only yet repaid by thee ?
Ah ! why was ruin so attractive made ?
Or why fond man so easily betrayed ? 40

Why heed we not, whilst mad we haste along
The gentle voice of peace, or pleasure's song ?
Or wherefore think the flowery mountain's side,
The fountain's murmurs, and the valley's pride,
Why think we these less pleasing to behold 45
Than dreary deserts, if they lead to gold ?

‘ Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
‘ When first from Schiraz’ walls I bent my way!’

‘ O cease, my fears ! all frantic as I go, 49
When thought creates unnumbered scenes of woe,
What if the lion in his rage I meet !—
Oft in the dust I view his printed feet :
And, fearful ! oft, when day’s declining light
Yields her pale empire to the mourner night, 54
By hunger roused, he scours the groaning plain
Gaunt wolves and sullen tigers in his train :
Before them death with shrieks directs their way,
Fills the wild yell, and leads them to their prey.

‘ Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
‘ When first from Schiraz’ walls I bent my way!’

‘ At that dead hour the silent asp shall creep,
If aught of rest I find, upon my sleep :
Or some swoln serpent twist his scales around,
And wake to anguish with a burning wound.
Thrice happy they, the wise contented poor, 63
From lust of wealth, and dread of death secure !

They tempt no deserts, and no griefs they find;
Peace rules the day, where reason rules the mind.

‘ Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,

‘ When first from Schiraz’ walls I bent my way!

‘ O hapless youth!—for she thy love hath won.

The tender Zara will be most undone!

Big swelled my heart, and ownèd the powerful
maid,

When fast she dropped her tears, as thus she said:

“ Farewell the youth whom sighs could not
detain; 75

Whom Zara’s breaking heart implored in vain!

Yet, as thou go’st, may every blast arise

Weak and unfelt, as these rejected sighs!

Safe o’er the wild, no perils mayst thou see, 79

No griefs endure, nor weep, false youth, like me.”

Oh! let me safely to the fair return,

Say, with a kiss, she must not, shall not mourn;

Oh! let me teach my heart to lose its fears,

Recalled by wisdom’s voice, and Zara’s tears.’

He said, and called on heaven to bless the day,

When back to Schiraz’ walls he bent his way. 86

VARIATION.

Ver. 83. Go, teach my heart to lose its painful fears.

THE END OF THE SECOND ECLOGUE.

ECLOGUE THE THIRD.

ABRA; OR, THE GEORGIAN SULTANA.

SCENE, A forest. TIME, The evening.



IN Georgia's land, where Tefflis' towers
 are seen,
 In distant view, along the level green,
 While evening dews enrich the glittering glade,
 And the tall forests cast a longer shade,
 What time 'tis sweet o'er fields of rice to stray,
 Or scent the breathing maize at setting day; 6
 Amidst the maids of Zagen's peaceful grove,
 Emyra sung the pleasing cares of love.

Of Abra first began the tender strain, 9
 Who led her youth with flocks upon the plain,
 At morn she came those willing flocks to lead,
 Where lilies rear them in the watery mead;
 From early dawn the livelong hours she told,
 Till late at silent eve she penned the fold.
 Deep in the grove, beneath the secret shade, 15
 A various wreath of odorous flowers she made:

Verses 5 and 6 were inserted in the second edition.

Gay-motleyed^a pinks and sweet jonquils she
 chose,
 The violet blue that on the moss-bank grows ;
 All sweet to sense, the flaunting rose was there ;
 The finished chaplet well adorned her hair. 20

Great Abbas chanced that fated morn to stray
 By love conducted from the chase away ;
 Among the vocal vales he heard her song,
 And sought, the vales and echoing groves among ;
 At length he found, and wooed^f the rural^g maid ;
 She knew the monarch, and with fear obeyed. 26
 ‘ Be every youth like royal Abbas moved,
 ‘ And every Georgian maid like Abra loved !’

The royal lover bore her from the plain ;
 Yet still her crook and bleating flock remain : 30
 Oft, as she went, she backward turned her view,
 And bade that crook and bleating flock adieu.
 Fair happy maid ! to other scenes remove,
 To richer scenes of golden power and love ! 34
 Go leave the simple pipe and shepherd’s strain ;
 With love delight thee, and with Abbas reign !
 ‘ Be every youth like royal Abbas moved,
 ‘ And every Georgian maid like Abra loved !’

^a That these flowers are found in very great abundance in some of the provinces of Persia, see the Modern History of the ingenious Mr. Salmon. C.

Yet, 'midst the blaze of courts, she fixed her
love

On the cool fountain, or the shady grove ; 40
Still, with the shepherd's innocence, her mind
To the sweet vale, and flowery mead, inclined ;
'And oft as spring renewed the plains with flowers,
Breathed his soft gales, and led the fragrant hours,
With sure return she sought the sylvan scene, 45
The breezy mountains, and the forests green.
Her maids around her moved, a duteous band !
Each bore a crook, all rural, in her hand :
Some simple lay of flocks and herds they sung ;
With joy the mountain, and the forest rung. 50
' Be every youth like royal Abbas moved, '
' And every Georgian maid like Abra loved !'

And oft the royal lover left the care
And thorns of state, attendant on the fair ;
Oft to the shades and low-roofed cots retired, 55
Or sought the vale where first his heart was fired :
A russet mantle, like a swain, he wore,
And thought of crowns, and busy courts, no more.
' Be every youth like royal Abbas moved, 59
' And every Georgian maid like Abra loved !'

Blest was the life that royal Abbas led
Sweet was his love, and innocent his bed
What if in wealth the noble maid excel ?
The simple shepherd girl can love as well.

Let those who rule on Persia's Jewelled throne
Be famed for love, and gentlest love alone ; 66
Or wreath, like Abbas, full of fair renown,
The lover's myrtle with the warrior's crown.
O happy days ! the maids around her say ;
O haste, profuse of blessings, haste away ! 70
‘ Be every youth like royal Abbas moved,
‘ And every Georgian maid-like Abra loved !’

THE END OF THE THIRD ECLOGUE.




ECLOGUE THE FOURTH.

AGIB AND SECANDER; OR, THE FUGITIVES

SCENE, A mountain in Circassia.

TIME, Midnight.

N fair Circassia, where, to love inclined,
Each swain was blest, for every maid
was kind ;

At that still hour, when awful midnight reigns,
And none, but wretches, haunt the twilight
plains ;

What time the moon had hung her lamp on high,
And past in radiance through the cloudless sky ;
Sad, o'er the dews, two brother shepherds fled,
Where wildering fear and desperate sorrow led :
Fast as they pressed their flight, behind them lay
Wide ravaged plains, and valleys stole away :
Along the mountain's bending sides they ran,
Till, faint and weak, Secander thus began.

SECANDER.

O stay thee, Agib, for my feet deny,
No longer friendly to my life, to fly.

Friend of my heart, O turn thee and survey ! 15
Trace our sad flight through all its length of way !
And first review that long extended plain,
And yon wide groves, already past with pain !
Yon ragged cliff, whose dangerous path we tried !
And, last, this lofty mountain's weary side ! 20

AGIB.

Weak as thou art, yet, hapless, must thou know
The toils of flight, or some severer woe !
Still, as I haste, the Tartar shouts behind,
And shrieks and sorrows load the saddening
wind :

In rage of heart, with ruin in his hand, 25
He blasts our harvests, and deforms our land.
Yon citron grove, whence first in fear we came,
Droops its fair honours to the conquering flame :
Far fly the swains, like us, in deep despair,
And leave to ruffian bands their fleecy care. 30

SECANDER.

Unhappy land, whose blessings tempt the
sword,
In vain, unheard, thou call'st thy Persian lord !
In vain thou court'st him, helpless, to thine aid,
To shield the shepherd, and protect the maid !
Far off, in thoughtless indolence resigned, 35
Soft dreams of love and pleasure soothe his mind :

'Midst fair sultanas lost in idle joy,
No wars alarm him, and no fears annoy.

AGIB.

Yet these green hills, in summer's sultry heat,
Have lent the monarch oft a cool retreat. 40
Sweet to the sight is Zabran's flowery plain,
And once by maids and shepherds loved in vain !
No more the virgins shall delight to rove
By Sargis' banks, or Irwan's shady grove ;
On Tarkic's mouftain catch the cooling gale, 45
Or breathe the sweets of Aly's flowery vale :
Fairscenes ! but, ah ! no more with peace possess'd,
With ease alluring, and with plenty blest !
No more the shepherds' whitening tents appear,
Nor the kind products of a bounteous year ; 50
No more the dale, with snowy blossoms crowned !
But ruin spreads her baleful fires around.

SECANDER.

In vain Circassia boasts her spicy¹ groves,
For ever famed for pure and happy loves :
In vain she boasts her fairest of the fair, 55
Their eyes' blue languish, and their golden hair !

VARIATIONS.

Ver. 49. No more the shepherds' whitening seats appear,
51. No more the dale, with snowy blossoms
crowned !

Those eyes in tears their fruitless grief must send ;
 Those hairs the Tartar's cruel hand shall rend.

AGIB.

Ye Georgian swains, that piteous learn from
 far
 Circassia's ruin, and the waste of war ; 60
 Some weightier arms than crooks and staves
 prepare,
 To shield your harvests, and defend your fair :
 The Turk and Tartar like designs pursue,
 Fixed to destroy, and steadfast to undo.
 Wild as his land, in native deserts bred, 65
 By lust incited, or by malice led,
 The villain Arab, as he prowls for prey,
 Oft marks with blood and wasting flames the
 way ;
 Yet none so cruel as the Tartar foe,
 To death inured, and nurst in scenes of woe. 70

He said, when loud along the vale was heard
 A shriller shriek, and nearer fires appeared :
 The affrighted shepherds, through the dews of
 night,
 Wide o'er the moonlight hills renewed their flight.

ODES
ON SEVERAL DESCRIPTIVE AND
ALLEGORIC SUBJECTS.

Εἰην
Εὐρησιέπης ἀναγείσθαι
Προσφορὸς ἐν Μοισᾷ Διφρῷ
Τόλμα δι κα. ἀμφιλαφὴς Δυναμὶς
Ἑσποῖτο. Πινῶαρ. Οὐλεμπ. ὅ



ODES.

ODE TO PITY.



THOU, the friend of man, assigned
With balmy hands his wounds to
bind,

And charm his frantic woe :
When first distress, with dagger keen,
Broke forth to waste his destined scene,
His wild unsated foe !

By Pella's^a bard, a magic name,
By all the griefs his thought could frame,
Receive my humble rite :
Long, pity, let the nations view
Thy sky-worn robes of tenderest blue,
And eyes of dewy light !

^a Euripides, of whom Aristotle pronounces, on a comparison of him with Sophocles, that he was the greater master of the tender passions, ἢν τραγικώτερος. C.

But wherefore need I wander wide
To old Ili-sus' distant side,

Deserted stream, and mute? 15

Wild Arun,^b too, has heard thy strains,
And echo, 'midst my native plains,
Been soothed by pity's lute.

There first the wren thy myrtles shed
On gentlest Otway's infant head, 20

To him thy cell was shown;
And while he sung the female heart,
With youth's soft notes unspoiled by art,
Thy turtles mixed their own.

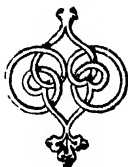
Come, pity, come, by fancy's aid, 25
Ev'n now my thoughts, relenting maid,

Thy temple's pride design:
Its southern'site, its truth complete,
Shall raise a wild enthusiast heat
In all who view the shine. 30

There picture's toils shall well relate
How chance, or hard involving fate,
O'er mortal bliss prevail:
The buskined muse shall near her stand,
And sighing prompt her tender hand, 35
With each disastrous tale.

^a The river Arun runs by the village [of Trotton] in Sussex, where Otway had his birth. C.

There let me oft, retired by day,
In dreams of passion melt away,
 Allowed with thee to dwell :
There waste the mournful lamp of night, so
Till, virgin, thou again delight
 To hear a British shell !



ODE TO FEAR.

THOU, to whom the world unknown,
 With all its shadowy shapes, is shown;
 Who seest, appalled, the unreal scene,
 While fancy lifts the veil between :

Ah fear ! ah frantic fear ! 5

I see, I see thee near.

I know thy hurried step, thy haggard eye !
 Like thee I start ; like thee disordered fly.
 For, lo, what monsters in thy train appear !
 Danger, whose limbs of giant mould 10
 What mortal eye can fixed behold ?
 Who stalks his round, an hideous form,
 Howling amidst the midnight storm ;
 Or throws him on the ridgy steep
 Of some loose hanging rock to sleep : 15
 And with him thousand phantoms joined,
 Who prompt to deeds accursed the mind :
 And those, the fiends, who, near allied,
 O'er nature's wounds, and wrecks, preside ;
 Whilst vengeance, in the lurid air, 20
 Lifts her red arm, exposed and bare :

On whom that ravening^c brood of fate,
 Who lap the blood of sorrow, wait :
 Who, fear, this ghastly train can see,
 And look not madly wild, like thee? 25

EPODE.

In earliest Greece, to thee, with partial choice,
 The grief-full muse address her infant tongue ;
 The maids and matrons, on her awful voice,
 Silent and pale, in wild amazement hung

Yet he, the bard^d who first invoked thy name,
 Disdained in Marathon its power to feel : 31
 For not alone he nursed the poet's flame,
 But reached from virtue's hand the patriot's
 steel.

But who is he whom later garlands grace,
 Who left awhile o'er Hybla's dew to rove, 35
 With trembling eyes thy dreary steps to trace,
 Where thou and furie shared the baleful grove ?

Wrapt in thy cloudy veil, the incestuous^e queen
 Sighed the sad call^f her son and husband heard,

^c Alluding to the *Κύναις ἄφικτους* of Sophocles. See the *Electra*. C.

^d *Æschylus*. C.

^e *Jocasta*. C.

^f — οὐδ' ἐτ' ὠρώρει βοή,

Ἦν μὲν σιωπή· φθέγμα δ' ἐξαίφνης τινός

When once alone it broke the silent scene, 40
 And he, the wretch of Thebes, no more appeared.

O fear, I know thee by my throbbing heart :
 Thy withering power inspired each mournful
 line :

Though gentle pity claim her mingled part,
 Yet all the thunders of the scene are thine ! 45

ANTISTROPHE.

Thou who such weary lengths hast past,
 Where wilt thou rest, mad nymph, at last ?
 Say, wilt thou shroud in haunted cell,
 Where gloomy rape and murder dwell ?
 Or, in some hollowed seat, 50
 'Gainst which the big waves beat,
 Hear drowning scamen's cries, in tempests
 brought ?
 Dark power, with shuddering meek submitted
 thought,
 Be mine to read the visions old
 Which thy awakening bards have told : 55
 And, lest thou meet my blasted view,
 Hold each strange tale devoutly true ;

Θώξεν αὐτόν, ὥστε πάντα ὀρθίας
 Στῆσαι φόβῳ δέισαντας ἐξαίφνης τριχας.

See the Œdip. Colon. of Sophocles. C.

Nē'er be I found, by thee o'erawed,
In that thrice hallowed eve, abroad,
When ghosts, as cottage maids believe, 60
Their pebbled beds permitted leave;
And goblins haunt, from fire, or fen,
Or mine, or flood, the walks of men!

O thou, whose spirit most possest
The sacred seat of Shakespear's breast! 65
By all that from thy prophet broke,
In thy divine emotions spoke;
Hither again thy fury deal,
Teach me but once like him to feel:
His cypress wreath my meed decree, 70
And I, O fear, will dwell with thee!



ODE TO SIMPLICITY.



THOU, by nature taught
 To breathe her genuine thought,
 In numbers warmly pure, and sweetly
 strong ;

Who first, on mountains wild,
 In fancy, loveliest child, 5
 Thy babe, or pleasure's, nursed the powers of
 song !

Thou, who, with hermit heart,
 Disdain'st the wealth of art,
 And gauds, and pageant weeds, and trailing pall ;
 But com'st a decent maid, 10
 In Attic robe arrayed,
 O chaste, unboastful nymph, to, thee I call ;

By all the honeyed store
 On Hybla's thymy shore ; 15
 By all her blooms, and mingled murmurs dear ;
 By her^s whose lovelorn woe,

8 The ἀηδών, or nightingale, for which Sophocles seems
 to have entertained a peculiar fondness C.

In evening musings slow,
Soothed sweetly sad Electra's poet's ear :

By old Cephisus deep,
Who spread his wavy sweep, 20
In warbled wanderings, round thy green retreat ;
On whose enamelled side,
When holy freedom died,
No equal haunt allured thy future feet.

O sister meek of truth, 25
To my admiring youth,
Thy sober aid and native charms infuse !
The flowers that sweetest breathe,
Though beauty culled the wreath, 29
Still ask thy hand to range their ordered hues.

While Rome could none esteem
But virtue's patriot theme,
You loved her hills, and led her laureat band :
But stayed to sing alone
To one distinguished throne ; 35
And turned thy face, and fled her altered land.

No more, in hall or bower,
The passions own thy power ;
Love, only love, her forceless numbers mean :
For thou hast left her shrine ; 40


Nor olive more, nor vine,
Shall gain thy feet to bless the servile scene.

Though taste, though genius, bless
To some divine excess,
Faints the cold work till thou inspire the whole ;
What each, what all supply, 45
May court, may charm, our eye ;
Thou, only thou, canst raise the meeting soul !

Of these let others ask,
To aid some mighty task, 50
I only seek to find thy temperate vale ;
Where oft my reed might sound
To maids and shepherds round,
And all thy sons, O nature, learn my tale.



ODE ON THE POETICAL CHARACTER.

 S once, if not with light regard,
 I read aright that gifted bard,
 (Him whose school above the rest
 His loveliest Elfin Queen has blest;)

One, only one, unrivalled fair,^b
 Might hope the magic girdle wear,
 At solemn turney hung on high,
 The wish of each love-darting eye;

Lo! to each other nymph, in turn, applied,
 As if, in air unseen, some hovering hand,
 Some chaste and angel friend to virgin fame,
 With whispered spell had burst the starting
 band,
 It left unblest her loathed dishonoured side;
 Happier, hopeless fair, if never
 Her baffled hand, with vain endeavour,
 Had touched that fatal zone to her denied!
 Young fancy thus, to me divinest name,
 To whom, prepared and bathed in heaven,
 The cest of amplest power is given:

^b Florimel. See Spenser, Leg. 4th. ?

To few the godlike gift assigns,
To gird their blest prophetic loins,
 And gaze her visions wild, and feel unmixed her
 flame!

The band, as fairy legends say,
 Was wove on that creating day,
 When He, who called with thought to birth 25
 Yon tented sky, this laughing earth,
 And dressed with springs and forests tall,
 And poured the main engirthing all,
 Long by the loved enthusiast wooed
 Himself in some diviner mood, 30
 Retiring, sat with her alone,
 And placed her on his sapphire throne;
 The whiles, the vaulted shrine around,
 Seraphic wires were heard to sound,
 Now sublimest triumph swelling, 35
 Now on love and mercy dwelling;
 And she, from out the veiling cloud,
 Breathed her magic notes aloud:
 And thou, thou rich-haired youth of morn,
 And all thy subject life was born! 40
 The dangerous passions kept aloof,
 Far from the sainted growing woof:
 But near it sat ecstatic wonder,
 Listening the deep applauding thunder;
 And truth, in sunny vest arrayed, 45
 By whose the tassel's eyes were made;

All the shadowy tribes of mind,
In braided dance, their murmurs joined,
And all the bright uncounted powers
Who feed on heaven's ambrosial flowers. 50
Where is the bard, whose soul can now
Its high presuming hopes avow?
Where he who thinks, with rapture blind,
This hallowed work for him designed?

High on some cliff, to heaven up-piled, 55
Of rude access, of prospect wild,
Where, tangled round the jealous steep,
Strange shades o'erbrow the valleys deep,
And holy genii guard the rock,
Its glooms embrown, its springs unlock, 60
While on its rich ambitious head,
An Eden, like his own, lies spread:
I view that oak, the fancied glades among,
By which as Milton lay, his evening ear, 64
From many a cloud that dropped ethereal dew,
Nigh spher'd in heaven, its native strains could
hear;

On which that ancient trump he reach'd was
hung:

Thither oft, his glory greeting,
From Waller's myrtle shades retreating,
With many a vow from hope's aspiring tongue,
My trembling feet his guiding steps pursue; 7

In vain—Such bliss to one alone,
Of all the sons of soul, was known;
And heaven, and fancy, kindred powers,
Have now o'erturned the inspiring bowers; 75
Or curtained close such scene from e'very future
view.



ODE TO MERCY.

STROPHE



THOU, who sitt'st a smiling bride
 By valour's armed and awful side,
 Gentlest of sky-born forms, and best
 adored ;

Who oft with songs, divine to hear,
 Winn'st from his fatal grasp the spear, 5
 And hid'st in wreaths of flowers his bloodless
 sword !

Thou who, amidst the deathful field,
 By godlike chiefs alone beheld,
 Oft with thy bosom bare art found, 9
 Pleading for him, the youth who sink's to ground :
 See, mercy, see, with pure and loaded hands,
 Before thy shrine my country's genius stands,
 And decks thy altar still, though pierced with
 many a wound.

ANTISTROPHE.

When he whom even our joys provoke,
 The fiend of nature, joined his yoke, 15

And 'rushed in wrath to make our isle his prey ;
Thy form, from out thy sweet abode,
O'ertook him on his blasted road,
And stopped his wheels, and looked his rage
away.

I see recoil his sable steeds, 20
That bore him swift to salvage deeds,
Thy tender melting eyes they own ;
O maid, for all thy love to Britain shown,
Where justice bars her iron tower,
To thee we build a roseate bower ; 25
Thou, thou shalt rule our queen, and share our
monarch's throne !



ODE TO LIBERTY.

STROPHE.

WHO shall awake the Spartan fire,
 And call in solemn sounds to life,
 The youths, whose locks divinely
 spreading,

Like vernal hyacinths in sullen hue,
 At once the breath of fear and virtue shedding,
 Applauding freedom loved of old to view?

What new Alcæus,¹ fancy-blest,
 Shall sing the sword, in myrtles drest,
 At wisdom's shrine awhile its flame conceal-
 ing,

(What place so fit to seal a deed renowned?) 10

¹ Alluding to that beautiful fragment of Alcæus :

Εν μύρτου κλαδί τὸ ξίφος φορήσω,
 Ὡς περ Ἀρμόδιος κ' Ἀριστογείτων,
 Φίλταθ' Ἀρμόδι' οὗ τι πον τίθνηκας,
 Νήσοις δ' ἐν μακίρων σε φασὶν εἶναι.
 Εν μύρτου κλαδί τὸ ξίφος φορήσω,
 Ὡς περ Ἀρμόδιος κ' Ἀριστογείτων,
 Ὅτ' Ἀθηναίης ἐν θυσσίαις
 Ἄνδρα τύραννον Ἰππαρχον ἐκαινέτην.
 Αἰ σφῶν κλέος ἔσσεται κατ' αἶαν,
 Φίλταθ' Ἀρμόδιε, κ' Ἀρωτόγειτων. C.

Till she her brightest lightnings round reveal-
 ing,
 It leaped in glory forth, and dealt her prompted
 wound !

O goddess, in that feeling hour,
 When most its sounds would court thy ears,
 Let not my shell's misguided power^k 15
 E'er draw thy sad, thy mindful tears.
 No, freedom, no, I will not tell
 How Rome, before thy weeping face,
 With heaviest sound, a giant-statue, fell,
 Pushed by a wild and artless race 20
 From off its wide ambitious base,
 When time his northern sons of spoil awoke,
 And all the blended work of strength and grace,
 With many a rude repeated stroke,
 And many a barbarous yell, to thousand frag-
 ments broke. 25

EPODE.

Yet, even where'er the least appeared,
 The admiring world thy hand revered ;
 Still 'midst the scattered states around,
 Some remnants of her strength were found ;
 They saw, by what escaped the storm, 30
 How wondrous rose her perfect form ;

^k Μη μὴ ταῦτα λέγωμες, ἃ δάκρυον ἤγαγε Δηοῖ.

Callimach. Ὑμνος εἰς Δήμητρα. C.

How in the great, the laboured whole,
 Each mighty master poured his soul!
 For sunny Florence, seat of art,
 Beneath her vines preserved a part, 35
 Till they,^f whom science loved to name,
 (O who could fear it?) quenched her flame.
 And lo, an humbler relic laid
 In jealous Pisa's^o olive shade!
 See small Marino^m joins the theme, 40
 Though least, not last in thy esteem:
 Strike, louder strike the ennobling strings
 To those,ⁿ whose merchant sons were kings;
 To him,^o who, decked with pearly pride,
 In Adria weds his green-haired bride; 45
 Hail, port of glory, wealth, and pleasure,
 Ne'er let me change this Lydian measure:
 Nor e'er her former pride relate,
 To sad Liguria's^p bleeding state.
 Ah no! more pleased thy haunts I seek, 50
 On wild Helvetia's^q mountains bleak:
 (Where, when the favoured of thy choice,
 The daring archer heard thy voice;
 Forth from his eyrie roused in dread,

^f The family of the Medici. C.

^m The little republic of San Marino. C.

ⁿ The Venetians. C.

^o The Doge of Venice. C.

^p Genoa. C

^q Switzerland. C.

The ravening eagle northward fled ;) 55
 Or dwell in willowed meads more near,
 With those^r to whom thy stork is dear :
 Those whom the rod of Alva bruised,
 Whose crown a British queen^s refused !
 The magic works, thou feel'st the strains, 60
 One holier name alone remains ;
 The perfect spell shall then avail,
 Hail, nymph, adored by Britain, hail !

ANTISTROPHE.

Beyond the measure vast of thought,
 The works the wizard time has wrought ! 65
 'The Gaul, 'tis held of antique story,
 Saw Britain linked to his now adverse strand,^t
 No sea between, nor cliff sublime and hoary,

^r The Dutch, amongst whom there are very severe penalties for those who are convicted of killing this bird. They are kept tame in almost all their towns, and particularly at the Hague, of the arms of which they make a part. The common people of Holland are said to entertain a superstitious sentiment, that if the whole species of them should become extinct, they should lose their liberties. C.

^s Queen Elizabeth. C.

^t This tradition is mentioned by several of our old historians. Some naturalists, too, have endeavoured to support the probability of the fact by arguments drawn from the correspondent disposition of the two opposite coasts. I do not remember that any poetical use has been hitherto made of it. C.

He passed with uhwet feet through all our land.

To the blown Baltic then, they say, 70

The wild waves found another way,

Where Orcas howls, his wolfish mountains
rounding ;

fill all the banded west at once 'gan rise,

A widewild stormeven nature's self confounding,

Withering her giant sons with strange uncouth
surprise. 75

This pillared earth so firm and wide,

By winds and inward labours torn,

In thunders dread was pushed aside,

And down the shouldering billows borne.

And see, like gems, her laughing train, 80

The little isles on every side,

Mona," once hid from those who search the main,

Where thousand elfin shapes abide,

And Wight who checks the westering tide,

" There is a tradition in the Isle of Man, that a mermaid becoming enamoured of a young man of extraordinary beauty, took an opportunity of meeting him one day as he walked on the shore, and opened her passion to him, but was received with a coldness, occasioned by his horror and surprise at her appearance. This, however, was so misconstrued by the sea lady, that, in revenge for his treatment of her, she punished the whole island, by covering it with a mist; so that all who attempted to carry on any commerce with it, either never arrived at it, but wandered up and down the sea, or were on a sudden wrecked upon its cliffs. C.

For thee consenting heaven has each bestowed,
A fair attendant on her sovereign pride : 86

To thee this blest divorce she owed,
For thou hast made her vales thy loved, thy last
abode.

SECOND EPODE.

Then too, 'tis said, an hoary pile,
'Midst the green navel of our isle, 90
Thy shrine in some religious wood,
O soul-enforcing goddess, stood !
There oft the painted native's feet
Were wont thy form celestial meet :
Though now with hopeless toil we trace 95
Time's backward rolls, to find its place ;
Whether the fiery-tresséd Dane,
Or Roman's self, o'erturned the fane,
Or in what heaven-left age it fell,
'Twere hard for modern song to tell. 100
Yet still, if truth those beams infuse,
Which guide at once, and charm the muse,
Beyond yon braided clouds that lie,
Paving the light-embroidered sky,
Amidst the bright pavilioned plains, 105
The beauteous model still remains.
There, happier than in islands blest,
Or bowers by spring or Hebe drest,

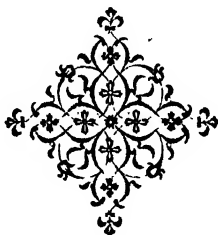
The chiefs who fill our Albion's story,
In warlike weeds, retired in glory, 110
Hear their consorted Druids sing
Their triumphs to the immortal string.

How may the poet now unfold
What never tongue or numbers told ?
How learn, delighted and amazed, 115
What hands unknown that fabric raised ?
Even now before his favoured eyes,
In Gothic pride, it seems to rise !
Yet Græcia's graceful orders join,
Majestic through the mixed design : 120
The secret builder knew to choose
Each sphere-found gem of richest hues ;
Whate'er heaven's purer mould contains
When nearer suns emblaze its veins ;
There on the walls the patriot's sight 125
May ever hang with fresh delight,
And, graved with some prophetic rage,
Read Albion's fame through every age.

Ye forms divine, ye laureat band,
That near her inmost altar stand ! 130
Now soothe her to her blissful train -
Blithe concord's social form to gain ;
Concord, whose myrtle wand can steep
Even anger's bloodshot eyes in sleep ;
Before whose breathing bosom's baln 135
Rage drops his steel, and storms grow calm :

Her let our sires and matrons hoar
Welcome to Britain's ravaged shore,
Our youths, enamoured of the fair,
Play with the tangles of her hair,
Till, in one loud applauding sound,
The nations shout to her around,
O how supremely art thou blest,
Thou, lady, thou shalt rule the west !

140



ODE TO A LADY,

ON THE DEATH OF COL. CHARLES ROSS, IN
THE ACTION AT FONTENOY.

Written May 1745.

WHILE, lost to all his former mirth,
Britannia's genius bends to earth,
And mourns the fatal day :
While, stained with blood, he strives to tear
Unseemly from his sea-green hair
The wreaths of cheerful May :

The thoughts which musing pity pays,
And fond remembrance loves to raise,
Your faithful hours attend ;
Still fancy, to herself unkind,
Awakes to grief the softened mind,
And points the bleeding friend.

10

VARIATION.

Ver. 4. While sunk in grief he strives to tear

By rapid Scheld's descending wave
 His country's vows shall bless the grave,
 Where'er the youth is laid :
 That sacred spot the village hind
 With every sweetest turf shall bind,
 And peace protect the shade.

16

O'er him, whose doom thy virtues grieve,
 Aërial forms shall sit at eve,
 And bend the pensive head !
 And, fallen to save his injured land,
 Imperial honour's awful hand
 Shall point his lonely bed !

20

The warlike dead of every age,
 Who fill the fair recording page,
 Shall leave their sainted rest ;
 And, half reclining on his spear,

25

VARIATIONS.

Ver. 19. E'en now, regardful of his doom,
 Applauding honour haunts his tomb,
 With shadowy trophies crowned :
 Whilst freedom's form beside her roves,
 Majestic through the twilight groves,
 And calls her heroes round.

19. Blest youth, regardful of thy doom,
 Aërial hands shall build thy tomb,
 With shadowy trophies crowned :
 Whilst honour bathed in tears shall rove
 'To sigh thy name through every grove,
 And call his heroes round.

Each wondering chief by turns appear,
To hail the blooming guest :

31

Old Edward's sons unknown to yield,
Shall crowd from Cressy's laurelled field,
And gaze with fixed delight ;
Again for Britain's wrongs they feel,
Again they snatch the gleamy steel,
And wish the avenging fight.

35

If, weak to soothe so soft a heart,
These pictured glories naught impart,
To dry thy constant tear :
If yet, in sorrow's distant eye,

41

VARIATIONS.

Ver. 31. Old Edward's sons, untaught to yield,
37. But lo, where, sunk in deep despair,
Her garments torn, her bosom bare,
Impatient freedom lies !
Her matted tresses madly spread,
To every sod which wraps the dead,
She turns her joyless eyes.

Ne'er shall she leave that lowly ground
Till notes of triumph, bursting round,
Proclaim her reign restored :
Till William seek the sad retreat,
And, bleeding at her sacred feet,
Present the sated sword.

37. If, drawn by all a lover's art,

Exposed and pale thou see'st him lie,
Wild war insulting near :

Where'er from time thou court'st relief,
The muse shall still, with social grief,
Her gentlest promise keep ;
Even humbled Harting's cottage vale ^x
Shall learn the sad repeated tale,
And bid her shepherds weep.

^x Harting, a village adjoining the parish of Trotton,
and about two miles distant from it.

VARIATION.

'Ver. 46. Even humble Harting's cottaged vale.



ODE.

WRITTEN IN THE SAME YEAR.*

HOW sleep the brave who sink to rest,
 By all their country's wishes blessed !
 When spring, with dewy fingers cold,
 Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
 She there shall dress a sweeter sod 5
 Than fancy's feet have ever trod.


By fairy hands their knell is rung ;
 By forms unseen their dirge is sung ;
 There honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
 To bless the turf that wraps their clay ; 10
 And freedom shall awhile repair,
 To dwell, a weeping hermit, there !

* In the beginning of the year 1746.

VARIATIONS.

- Ver. 5. She then shall dress a sweeter sod
 7. By hands unseen the knell is rung ;
 8. By fairy forms their dirge is sung ;

ODE TO EVENING. ¹

 F aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
 May hope, chastë eve, to soothe thy
 modest ear,
 Like thy own solemn springs,
 Thy springs, and dying gales,

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired
 sun 5

Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
 With prede ethereal wove,
 O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
 With short, shrill shriek, flits by on leathern
 wing ; 10
 Or where the beetle winds
 His small but sullen horn,

VARIATIONS.

- Ver. 2. May hope, O pensive eve, to soothe thine ear,
 Like thy own brawling springs,
 9. While air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed
 bat,

As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
 Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum :
 Now teach me, maid composed, 15
 To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening
 vale,
 May, not unseemly, with its stillness suit,
 As, musing slow, I hail
 Thy genial loved return ! 20

For when thy folding star arising shows
 His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
 The fragrant hours, and elves
 Who slept in flowers the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows
 with sedge, 25
 And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,
 The pensive pleasures sweet
 Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheeted lake
 Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed
 pile, 30

VARIATIONS.

- Ver. 24. Who slept in buds the day,
 29. Then let me rove some wild and heathy scene,
 Or find some ruin, 'midst its dreary dells,
 Whose walls more awful nod
 By thy religious gleams.

Or up-land fallows grey
 Reflect its last cool gleam.

But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
 Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut,
 That from the mountain's side, 35
 Views wilds, and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires;
 And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
 Thy dewy fingers draw
 The gradual dusky veil. 40

While spring shall pour his showers, as oft he
 wont,
 And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest eve!
 While summer loves to sport
 Beneath thy lingering light;

While fallow autumn fills thy lap with leaves;
 Or winter, yelling through the troublous air, 46
 Affrights thy shrinking train,
 And rudely rends thy robes;

VARIATION

Ver. 33. Or, if chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
 Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut,

So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
 Shall fancy, friendship, science, rose-lipp'd
 health,

50

Thy gentlest influence own,
 And hymn thy favourite name!

VARIATIONS.

- Ver. 49. So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,
 Shall fancy, friendship, science, smiling peace,
 Thy gentlest influence own,
 And love thy favourite name!
49. So long, sure-found beneath thy sylvan shed,



ODE TO PEACE.



THOU, who bad'st thy turtles bear,
 Swift from his grasp, thy golden hair,
 And sought'st thy native skies;
 When war, by vultures drawn from far,
 To Britain bent his iron car, 5
 And bade his storms arise!

Tired of his rude tyrannic sway,
 Our youth shall fix some festive day,
 His sullen shrines to burn :
 But thou who hear'st the turning spheres, 10
 What sounds may charm thy partial ears.
 And gain'st thy blest return!

O peace, thy injured robes up-bind !
 O rise ! and leave not one behind
 Of all thy beamy train ; 15
 The British lion, goddess sweet,
 Lies stretched on earth to kiss thy feet,
 And own thy holier reign.

Let others court thy transient smile,
But come to grace thy western isle,
By warlike honour led ;
And, while around her ports rejoice,
While all her sons adore thy choice,
With him for ever wed !



THE MANNERS.

AN ODE.

FAREWELL, for clearer ken designed,
 The dim-discovered tracts of mind ;
 Truths which, from "action's paths
 retired,

My silent search in vain required !
 No more my sail that deep explores ; 5
 No more I search those magic shores ;
 What regions part the world of soul,
 Or whence thy streams, opinion, roll :
 If e'er I round such fairy field,
 Some power impart the spear and shield, 10
 At which the wizard passions fly ;
 By which the giant follies die !

Farewell the porch whose roof is seen
 Arched with the enlivening olive's green :
 Where science, pranked in tissued vest, 15
 By reason, pride, and fancy drest,
 Comes, like a bride, so trim arrayed,
 To wed with doubt in Plato's shade !

Youth of the quick uncheated sight,
 Thy walks, observance, more invite ! 20
 O thou who lov'st that ampler range,
 Where life's wide prospects round thee change,
 And, with her mingling sons allied,
 Throw'st the prattling page aside,
 To me, in converse sweet, impart 25
 To read in man the native heart ;
 To learn, where science sure is found,
 From nature as she lives around ;
 And, gazing oft her mirror true,
 By turns each shifting image view ! 30
 Till meddling art's officious lore
 Reverse the lessons taught before ;
 Alluring from a safer rule,
 To dream in her enchanted school :
 Thou, Heaven, whate'er of great we boast, 32
 Hast blest this social science most.

Retiring hence to thoughtful cell,
 As fancy breathes her potent spell,
 Not vain she finds the charming task,
 In pageant quaint, in motley mask ; 40
 Behold, before her musing eyes,
 The countless manners round her rise ;
 While, ever varying as they pass,
 To some contempt applies her glass :
 With these the white-robed maids combine ; 45

And those the laughing satyrs join !
 But who is he whom now she views,
 In robe of wild contending hues ?
 Thou by the passions nursed, I greet
 The comic sock that binds thy feet ! 50
 O humour, thou whose name is known
 To Britain's favoured isle alone •
 Me too amidst thy band admit ; °
 There where the young-eyed healthful wit,
 (Whose jewels in his crispéd hair 55
 Are placed each other's beams to share ;
 Whom no delights from thee divide)
 In laughter loosed, attends thy side.

°
 By old Miletus^y, who so long
 Has ceased his love-inwoven song ; 60
 By all you taught the Tuscan maids,
 In changed Italia's modern shades ;
 By him^z whose knight's distinguished name
 Refined a nation's lust of fame ;
 Whose tales e'en now, with echoes sweet, 65
 Castilia's Moorish hills repeat ;
 Or him^a whom Seine's blue nymphs deplore,

^y Alluding to the Milesian tales, some of the earliest romances. C.

^z Cervantes. C.

^a Monsieur Le Sage, author of the incomparable Adventures of Gil Blas de Santillane, who died in Paris in the year 1745. C.


In watchet weeds on Gallia's shore ;
Who drew the sad Sicilian maid,
By virtues in her sire betrayed. 70

O nature, boon from whom proceed
Each forceful thought, each prompted deed ;
If but from thee I hope to feel,
On all my heart imprint thy seal !
Let some retreating cynic find 75
Those oft-turned scrolls I leave behind :
The sports and I this hour agree,
To rove thy scene-full world with thee !



THE PASSIONS.

AN ODE FOR MUSIC.*

HEN music, heavenly maid, was
 young,
 While yet in early Greece she sang,
 The passions oft, to hear her shell,
 Thronged around her magic cell,
 Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting, 6
 Possess beyond the muse's painting :
 By turns they felt the glowing mind
 Disturbed, delighted, raised, refined ;
 Till once, 'tis said, when all were fired,
 Filled with fury, rapt, inspired, 10
 From the supporting myrtles round
 They snatched her instruments of sound ;
 And, as they oft had heard apart
 Sweet lessons of her forceful art,
 Each (for madness ruled the hour) 15
 Would prove his own expressive power.

First fear, his hand, its skill to try,
 Amid the chords bewildered laid,

* Performed at Oxford, with Hayes' music, in 1750.

And back recoiled, he knew not why,
Even at the sound himself had made. 20

Next anger rushed ; his eyes on fire,
In lightnings owned his secret stings :
In one rude clash he struck the lyre,
And swept, with hurried hand, the strings.

With woful measures wan despair 25
Low, sullen sounds his grief beguiled ;
A solemn, strange, and mingled air ;
'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.

But thou, O hope, with eyes so fair,
What was thy delightful measure? 30
Still it whispered promised pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail !
Still would her touch the strain prolong ;
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
She called on echo still, through all the song ;
And, where her sweetest theme she chose, 36
A soft responsive voice was heard at every
close,
And hope enchanted smiled, and waved her
golden hair.

VARIATION.

Ver. 30 What was thy delighted measure ?

And longer had she sung ; - but, with a frown,
Revenge impatient rose : 40

He threw his blood-stained sword, in thunder,
down ;

And with a withering look,
The war-denouncing trumpet took,
And blew a blast so loud and dread,
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe ! 45

And, ever and anon, he beat
The doubling drum, with furious heat ;
And though sometimes, each dreary pause be-
tween,

Dejected pity, at his side,
Her soul-subduing voice applied, 50
Yet still he kept his wild-unaltered mien,
While each strained ball of sight seemed bursting
from his head.

Thy numbers, jealousy, to naught were fixed ;
Sad proof of thy distressful state ;
Of differing themes the veering song was
mixed ; 55
And now it courted love, now raving called
on hate.

With eyes upraised, as one inspired,
Pale melancholy sat retired ;
And, from her wild sequestered seat,
In notes by distance made more sweet, 60

Poured through the mellow horn her pensive
soul :

And, dashing soft from rocks around,
Bubbling runnels joined the sound ;
Through glades and glooms the mingled measure
stole, 64

Or, o'er some haunted stream, with fond
delay,

Round an holy calm diffusing,
Love of peace, and lonely musing,
In hollow murmurs died away.

But O ! how altered was its sprightlier tone,
When cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,
Her bow across her shoulder flung, • 71
Her buskins gemmed with morning dew,
Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket rung,
The hunter's call, to faun and dryad known '
The oak-crowned sisters, and their chaste-eyed
queen, 71

Satyrs and sylvan boys, were seen,
Peeping from forth their alleys green :
Brown exercise rejoiced to hear ;
And sport leapt up, and seized his beechen
spear.

Last came joy's ecstatic trial : 80
He, with viny crown advancing,
First to the lively pipe his hand addrest ;
But soon he saw the brisk awakening viol,

Whose sweet entrancing voice he loved the
best ;

84

They would have thought who heard the strain
They saw, in Tempe's vale, her native maids,
Amidst the festal sounding shades,
To some unwearied minstrel dancing,
While, as his flying fingers kissed the strings, ~~as~~
Love framed with mirth a gay fantastic round ·
Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound ;
And he, amidst his frolic play,
As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odours from his dewy wings.

O, music ! sphere-descended maid, 95
Friend of pleasure, wisdom's aid !
Why, goddess ! why, to us denied,
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside ?
As, in that loved Athenian bower,
You learned an all-commanding power, 100.
Thy mimic soul, O nymph endeared,
Can well recall what then it heard ;
Where is thy native simple heart,
Devote to virtue, fancy, art ?
Arise, as in that elder time, 105
Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime !
Thy wonders, in that godlike age,
Fill thy recording sister's page—
'Tis said, and I believe the tale,

Thy humblest reed could more prevail, . 110
Had more of strength, diviner rage,
Than all which charms this laggard age ;
E'en all at once together found,
Cecilia's mingled world of sound—
O bid our vain endeavours cease ; 115
Revive the just designs of Greece :
Return in all thy simple state !
Confirm the tales her sons relate !



Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore
 When Thames in summer wreaths is drest,
 And oft suspend the dashing oar, 15
 To bid his gentle spirit rest!

And oft, as ease and health retire
 To breezy lawn, or forest deep,
 The friend shall view yon whitening spire,^c
 And 'mid the varied landscape weep. 20

But thou, who own'st that earthy bed,
 Ah! what will every dirge avail;
 Or tears, which love and pity shed,
 That mourn beneath the gliding sail?

Yet lives there one whose heedless eye 25
 Shall scorn thy pale shrine glimmering near?
 With him, sweet bard, may fancy die,
 And joy desert the blooming year.

But thou, lorn stream, whose sullen^d tide
 No sedge-crowned sisters now attend, 30
 Now waft me from the green hill's side,
 Whose cold turf hides the buried friend!

And see—the fairy valleys fade;
 Dun night has veiled the solemn view!

^c Richmond church, [in which Thomson was buried.] C.

Yet once again, dear parted shade, 35
Meek nature's child, again adieu !

The genial meads, assigned to bless
Thy life, shall mourn thy early doom ;
Their hinds and shepherd-girls shall dress,
With simple hands, thy rural tomb. 40

Long, long, thy stone and pointed clay
Shall melt the musing Briton's eyes :
O vales and wild woods ! shall he say,
In yonder grave your druid lies !



AN ODE ON THE POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS
OF THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND;

CONSIDERED AS THE SUBJECT OF POETRY ; INSCRIBED
TO MR. HOME, AUTHOR OF DOUGLAS.



OME, thou return'st from Thames,
whose naiads long
Have seen thee lingering with a fond
delay,

'Mid those soft friends, whose hearts, some fu-
ture day,

Shall melt, perhaps, to hear thy tragic song?

Go, not unmindful of that cordial youth^d

Whom, long endeared, thou leav'st by Lavant's
side ;

Together let us wish him lasting truth,

And joy untainted with his destined bride.

Go ! nor regardless, while these numbers boast

My short-lived bliss, forget my social name ;

But think, far off, how, on the southern coast,

I met thy friendship with an equal flame !

^d A gentleman of the name of Barrow, who introduced
Home to Collins.—ED. 1788. .

Fresh to that soil thou turn'st, where every vale
 Shall prompt the poet, and his song demand :
 To thee thy copious subjects ne'er shall fail ; 15
 Thou need'st but take thy pencil to thy hand,
 And paint what all believe, who own thy genial
 land.

II.

There, must thou wake perforce thy Doric quill ;
 'Tis fancy's land to which thou sett'st thy feet ;
 Where still, 'tis said, the fairy people meet, 20
 Beneath each birken shade, on mead or hill.
 There, each trim lass, that skims the milky store,
 To the swart tribes their creamy bowls allots ;
 By night they sip it round the cottage door,
 While airy minstrels warble jocund notes. 25
 There every herd, by sad experience, knows
 How, wing'd with fate, their elf-shot arrows fly,
 When the sick ewe her summer food forgoes,
 Or, stretch'd on earth, the heart-smit heifers lie.
 Such airy beings awe the untutored swain : 30
 Nor thou, though learned, his homelier thoughts
 neglect ;

VARIATIONS.

Ver. 16. Thou need'st but take the pencil to thy hand,
 23. To the swart tribes their creamy bowl allots ;

Let thy sweet muse the rural faith sustain ;
 These are the themes of simple, sure effect,
 That add new conquests to her boundless reign,
 And fill, with double force, her heart-com-
 manding strain. 35

III.

E'en yet preserved, how often may'st thou hear,
 Where to the pole the Boreal mountains run,
 Taught by the father, to his listening son,
 Strange lays, whose power had charmed a
 Spenser's ear.

At every pause, before thy mind possest, 40
 Old Runic bards shall seem to rise around,
 With uncouth lyres, in many-coloured vest,
 Their matted hair with boughs fantastic
 crowned :

Whether thou bid'st the well-taught hind repeat
 The choral dirge, that mourns some chieftain
 brave, 45

When every shrieking maid her bosom beat,
 And strewed with choicest herbs his scented
 grave !

VARIATION.

Ver. 44. Whether thou bid'st the well-taught hind relate

Or whether, sitting in the shepherd's shiel,*
 Thou hear'st some sounding tale of war's alarms;
 When at the bugle's call, with fire and steel, 50
 The sturdy clans poured forth their brawny
 swarms,
 And hostile brothers met, to prove each other's
 arms.

IV.

Tis thine to sing, how, framing hideous spells,
 In Sky's lone isle, the gifted wizard seer,
 Lodged in the wintry cave with fate's fell spear,
 Or in the depth of Uist's dark forest dwells: 56
 How they, whose sight such dreary dreams
 engross,
 With their own vision oft astonished droop,
 When, o'er the watery strath, or quaggy moss,
 They see the gliding ghosts unbodied troop. 60
 Or, if in sports, or on the festive green,
 Their destined glance some fated youth descry,
 Who now, perhaps, in lusty vigour seen,

VARIATIONS.

Ver. 51. The sturdy clans poured forth their bony
 swarms,

56. Or in the gloom of Uist's dark forest dwells:

58. With their own visions oft afflicted droop,

* A summer hut, built in the high part of the mountains, to tend their flocks in the warm season, when the pasture is fine. — ED. 1788.

And rosy health, shall soon lamented die.

For them the viewless forms of air obey; 63
Their bidding heed, and at their beck repair :

They know what spirit brews the stormful day,
And heartless, oft like moody madness, stare
To see the phantom train their secret work
prepare.

v.

To monarchs dear, some hundred miles astray, 70
Oft have they seen fate give the fatal blow !

The seer, in Sky, shrieked as the blood did flow,
When headless Charles warm on the scaffold lay !
As Boreas threw his young Aurora^f forth,

In the first year of the first George's reign,
And battles raged in welkin of the North, , 76

They mourned in air, fell, fell rebellion slain !
And as, of late, they joyed in Preston's fight,
Saw, at sad Falkirk, all their hopes near
crowned !

VARIATION.

Ver. 66. Their bidding mark, and at their beck repair :

^f By young Aurora, Collins undoubtedly meant the first appearance of the northern lights, which happened about the year 1715 ; at least it is most highly probable, from this peculiar circumstance, that no ancient writer whatever has taken any notice of them, nor even any modern one, previous to the above period.—*Ep.* 1788.

They raved ! divining, through their second
 sight,^a 80
 Pale, red Culloden, where these hopes were
 drowned !
 Illustrious William !^b Britain's guardian name !
 One William saved us from a tyrant's stroke ;
 He, for a sceptre, gained heroic fame,
 But thou, more glorious, slavery's chain hast
 broke, 85
 To reign a private man, and bow to freedom's
 yoke !

VI.

These, too, thou'lt sing ! for well thy magic muse
 Can to the topmost heaven of grandeur soar ;
 Or stoop to wail the swain that is no more !
 Ah, homely swains ! your homeward steps ne'er
 lose ; 90
 Let not dank Willⁱ mislead you to the heath ;
 Dancing in mirky night, o'er fen and lake,
 He glows, to draw you downward to your
 death,

^a Second sight is the term that is used for the divination of the Highlanders.—ED. 1788.

^b The late Duke of Cumberland, who defeated the Pretender at the battle of Culloden.—ED. 1788.

ⁱ A fiery meteor, called by various names, such as Will with the Wisp, Jack with the Lantern, etc. It hovers in the air over marshy and fenny places.—ED. 1788.

In his bewitched, low, marshy, willow brake ! 94
 What though far off, from some dark dell espied,
 His glimmering mazes cheer the excursive
 sight,
 Yet turn, ye wanderers, turn your steps aside,
 Nor trust the guidance of that faithless light ;
 For watchful, lurking, 'mid the unrustling reed,
 At those mirk hours the wily monster lies,
 And listens oft to hear the passing steed, 100
 And frequent round him rolls his sullen eyes,
 If chance his savage wrath may some weak
 wretch surprise.

VII.

Ah, luckless swain, o'er all unblest, indeed ! 104
 Whom late bewildered in the dank, dark fen,
 Far from his flocks, and smoking hamlet, then !
 To that sad spot where hums the sedgy weed :
 On him, enraged, the fiend in angry mood,
 Shall never look with pity's kind concern, 108
 But instant, furious, raise the whelming flood
 O'er its drowned banks, forbidding all return !
 Or, if he meditate his wished escape,
 To some dim hill, that seems uprising near,

VARIATIONS.

- Ver. 100. At those sad hours the wily monster lies,
 111. O'er its drowned bayk, forbidding all return

To his faint eye the grim and grisly shape,
In all its terrors clad, shall wild appear. 115

Meantime the watery surge shall round him
rise,

Poured sudden forth from every swelling source !

What now remains but tears and hopeless sighs ?
His fear-shook limbs have lost, their youthly
force,

And down the waves he floats, a pale and breath-
less corse ! 120

VIII.

For him in vain his anxious wife shall wait,

Or wander forth to meet him on his way ;

For him in vain at to-fall of the day,

His babes shall linger at the unclosing gate !

Ah, ne'er shall he return ! Alone, if night 125

Her travelled limbs in broken slumbers steep,

With drooping willows drest, his mournful
sprite

Shall visit sad, perchance, her silent sleep :

Then he, perhaps, with moist and watery hand,

VARIATIONS.

Ver. 124. His babes shall linger at the cottage gate !

127. With dropping willows drest, his mournful
sprite „

Shall fondly seem to press her shuddering
 cheek, 110
 And with his blue-swoln face before her stand,
 And, shivering cold, these piteous accents
 speak :
 Pursue, dear wife, thy daily toils pursue,
 At dawn or dusk, industrious as before ;
 Nor e'er of me one helpless thought renew, 135
 While I lie weltering on the osiered shore,
 Drown'd by the kelpie's^k wrath, nor e'er shall
 aid thee more !”

IX.

Unbounded is thy range ; with varied skill .
 Thy muse may, like those feathery tribes which
 spring 139
 From their rude rocks, extend her skirting wing
 Round the moist marge of each cold Hebrid isle,
 To that hoar pile,^l which still its ruin shows .

VARIATIONS.

Ver. 130. Shall seem to press her cold and shuddering
 cheek,

133. Proceed, dear wife, thy daily toils pursue,

135. Nor e'er of me one hapless thought renew.

138. Unbounded is thy range ; with varied style

^k The water fiend.

^l On the largest of the Flannan Islands (Isles of the Hebrides) are the ruins of a chapel dedicated to St. Flannan. This is reckoned by the inhabitants of the Western

In whose small vaults a pigmy-folk is found,
 Whose bones the delver with his spade up-
 throws,
 And culls them, wondering, from the hallowed
 ground ! 145
 Or thither, where, beneath the showery west,
 The mighty kings of three fair realms are laid ;
 Once foes, perhaps, together now they rest,^m
 No slaves revere them, and no wars invade :
 Yet frequent now, at midnight solemn hour, 150
 The rifted mounds their yawning cells unfold,

VARIATION.

Ver. 150. Yet frequent now, at midnight's solemn hour,
 Isles a place of uncommon sanctity. One of the Flannan
 Islands is termed the Isle of Pigmies; and Martin says
 there have been many small bones dug up here, resembling
 in miniature those of the human body.—Note to the poem
 in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh,
 1788.—See Memoir of Collins prefixed to this Edition,
 p. xxvi.

^m The Island of Iona or Icolmkill. See Martin's De-
 scription of the Western Islands of Scotland. That author
 informs us that forty-eight kings of Scotland, four kings
 of Ireland, and five of Norway, were interred in the
 Church of St. Ouran in that island. There were two
 churches and two monasteries founded there by St. Colum-
 bus, about A. D. 565. Bed. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. Collins has
 taken all his information respecting the Western Isles
 from Martin; from whom he may, likewise, have derived
 his knowledge of the popular superstitions of the High-
 landers, with which this Ode shows so perfect an acquaint-
 ance.—Note to the poem in the Transactions, &c.

And forth the monarchs stalk with sovereign
power, [gold.
In pageant robes, and wreathed with sheeny
And on their twilight tombs ærial council hold

X.

But, oh, o'er all, forget not Kilda's race,ⁿ
On whose bleak rocks, which brave the wasting
tides.

Fair nature's daughter, virtue, yet abides.
Go ! just, as they, their blameless manners trace!

Then to my ear transmit some gentle song,
Of those whose lives are yet sincere and plain, " "

Their bounded walks the rugged cliffs along,
 And all their prospect but the wintry main.

With sparing temperance, at the needful time,
They drain the scented spring ; or, hunger-press'd,

Along the Atlantic rock, undreading climb.
And of its eggs despoil the solan's^o nest. 100

VARIATION.

Ver. 164. They drain the sainted spring; or, hunger-
prest,

ⁿ The character of the inhabitants of St. Kilda, as here described, agrees perfectly with the accounts given by Martin and by Macaulay, of the people of that island. It is the most westerly of all the Hebrides, and is above 130 miles distant from the main land of Scotland.—Note to the poem in the Transactions, &c.

° An aquatic bird like a goose, on the eggs of which the inhabitants of St. Kilda, another of the Hebrides, chiefly subsist. — Ed. 1788.

Thus, blest in primal innocence, they live
 Sufficed, and happy with that frugal fare
 Which tasteful toil and hourly danger give.
 Hard is their shallow soil, and bleak and bare ;
 Nor ever vernal bee was heard to murmur
 there !

171

XI.

Nor need'st thou blush that such false themes
 engage
 Thy gentle mind, of fairer stores possesst ;
 For not alone they touch the village breast,
 But filled, in elder time, the historic page. 175
 There, Shakespeare's self, with every garland
 crowned,
 Flew to those fairy climes his fancy sheen,
 In musing hour ; his wayward sisters found,
 And with their terrors drest the magic scene. 179
 From them he sung, when, 'mid his bold design,
 Before the Scot, afflicted, and aghast,
 The shadowy kings of Banquo's fated line
 Through the dark cave in gleamy pageant passed.
 Proceed ! nor quit the tales which, simply told,
 Could once so well my answering bosom pierce ;
 Proceed, in forceful sounds, and colours bold,
 The native legends of thy land rehearse ;
 To such adapt thy lyre, and suit thy powerful
 verse.

XII.

In scenes like these, which, daring to depart
 From sober truth, are still to nature true, 196
 And call forth fresh delight to fancy's view,
 The heroic muse employed her Tasso's art!
 How have I trembled, when, at Tancred's
 stroke,
 Its gushing blood the gaping cypress poured!
 When each live plant with mortal accents
 spoke, 105
 And the wild blast upheaved the vanished sword!
 How have I sat, when piped the pensive wind,
 To hear his harp by British Fairfax strung!
 Prevailing poet! whose undoubting mind
 Believed the magic wonders which he sung! 200
 Hence, at each sound, imagination glows!

VARIATIONS.

Ver. 193. How have I trembled, when, at Tancred's
 side,
 Like him I stalked, and all his passions
 felt;
 When charmed by Ismen, through the forest
 wide,
 Barked in each plant, a talking spirit dwelt!

201. Hence, sure to charm, his early numbers flow,
 Though strong, yet sweet——
 Though faithful, sweet; though strong, of
 simple kind.

Hence, at each picture, vivid life starts here !

Hence his warm lay with softest sweetness
flows !

Melting it flows, pure, murmuring, strong, and
clear,

And fills the impassioned heart, and wins the
harmonious ear !

205

XIII.

All hail, ye scenes that o'er my soul prevail !

Ye splendid friths and lakes, which, far away,

Are by smooth Annan^p filled or pastoral Tay,¹

Or Don's^p romantic springs, at distance hail ! 209

The time shall come, when I, perhaps, may tread

Your lowly glens, o'erhung with spreading
broom ;

Or, o'er your stretching heaths, by fancy led ;

Or o'er your mountains creep, in awful gloom !

Then will I dress once more the faded bower,

VARIATIONS.

Hence, with each theme, he bids the bosom
glow,

While his warm lays an easy passage find,
Poured through each inmost nerve, and lull
the harmonious ear.

Ver. 204. Melting it flows, pure, numerous, strong and
clear,

^p Three rivers in Scotland.—Ed. 1788.

Where Jonson^a sat in Drummond's classic
 shade; 215
 Or crop, from Tiviotdale, each lyric flower,
 And mourn, on Yarrow's banks, where Willy's
 laid
 Meantime, ye powers that on the plains which
 bore
 The cordial youth, on Lothian's plains,^r
 attend!— 219
 Where'er Home dwells, on hill, or lowly moor,
 To him I lose, your kind protection lend,
 And, touched with love like mine, preserve my
 absent friend!

VARIATIONS.

Ver. 216. Or crop from Tiviot's dale each—

220. Where'er he dwell, on hill, or lowly muir,

^a Ben Jonson undertook a journey to Scotland afoot, in 1619, to visit the poet Drummond, at his seat of Hawthornden, near Edinburgh. Drummond has preserved in his works, some very curious heads of their conversation. —Note to the poem in the Transactions, &c.^f

^r Barrow, it seems, was at the Edinburgh University, which is in the county of Lothian.—Ed. 1788.

AN EPISTLE,
 ADDRESSED TO SIR THOMAS HANMER, ON HIS
 EDITION OF SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS.

SIR,

WHILE, born to bring the muse's
 happier days,
 A patriot's hand protects a poet's lay ;
 While, nursed by you, she sees her myrtles bloor .
 Green and unwithered o'er his honoured tomb ;
 Excuse her doubts, if yet she fears to tell
 What secret transports in her bosom swell :
 With conscious awe she hears the critic's fame,
 And blushing hides her wreath at Shakespeare's
 name.

VARIATION.

Ver. 1. While, owned by you, with smiles the muse
 surveys
 The expected triumph of her sweetest lays :
 While, stretched at ease, she boasts your guar-
 dian aid,
 Secure, and happy in her sylvan shade :
 Excuse her fears, who scarce a verse bestows
 In just remembrance of the debt she owes ;
 With conscious, &c

Hard was the lot those injured strains endured,
 Unowned by science, and by years obscured : 10
 Fair fancy wept ; and echoing sighs confessed
 A fixed despair in every tuneful breast.
 Not with more grief the afflicted swains appear,
 When wintry winds deform the plenteous year ;
 When lingering frosts the ruined seats invade 15
 Where peace resorted, and the graces played.

VARIATION.

Ver. 9. Long slighted fancy with a mother's care
 Wept o'er this works, and felt the last despair :
 Torn from her head, she saw the roses fall,
 By all deserted, though admired by all :
 And " oh ! " she cried, " shall science still
 resign
 Whate'er is nature's, and whate'er is mine ?
 Shall taste and art but show a cold regard,
 And scornful pride reject the unlettered bard ?
 Ye myrtled nymphs, who own my gentle reign,
 Tune the sweet lyre, and grace my airy train,
 If, where ye rove, your searching eyes have
 known
 One perfect mind, which judgment calls its own ;
 There every breast its fondest hopes must bend,
 And every muse with tears await her friend."
 'Twas then fair Isis from her stream arose,
 In kind compassion of her sister's woes.
 'Twas then she promised to the mourning maid
 The immortal honours which thy hands have
 paid :
 " My best loved son," she said, " shall yet
 restore
 Thy ruined sweets, and fancy weep no more "
 Each rising art by slow gradation moves :
 Toil builds, &c.

Each rising art by just gradation moves,
 Toil builds on toil, and age on age improves :
 The muse alone unequal dealt her rage, 19
 And graced with noblest pomp her earliest stage.
 Preserved through time, the speaking scenes
 impart
 Each changeful wish of Phædra's tortured heart ;
 Or paint the curse that marked the Theban's^s
 reign,
 A bed incestuous, and a father slain.
 With kind concern our pitying^d eyes o'erflow, 25
 Trace the sad tale, and own another's woe.

To Rome removed, with wit secure to please,
 The comic sisters kept their native ease :
 With jealous fear, declining Greece beheld
 Her own Menander's art almost excelled ; 30
 But every muse essayed to raise in vain
 Some laboured rival of her tragic strain :
 Ilissus' laurels, though transferred with toil,
 Drooped their fair leaves, nor knew the un-
 friendly soil.

VARIATIONS.

- Ver. 25. Line after line our pitying eyes o'erflow,
 27. To Rome removed, with equal power to please,

* The *Cædipus* of Sophocles.

As Arts expired, resistless dulness rose ;
 Goths, priests, or vandals,—all were learning's
 foes.

Till Julius^t first recalled each exiled maid,
 And Cosmo owned them in the Etrurian shade :
 Then, deeply skilled in love's engaging theme,
 The soft Provençal passed to Arno's stream :
 With graceful ease the wanton lyre he strung ;
 Sweet flowed the lays—but love was all he sung.
 The gay description could not fail to move,
 For, led by nature, all are friends to love.

But Heaven, still various in its works, decreed
 The perfect boast of time should last succeed.

VARIATIONS.

- ver. 35. When Rome herself, her envied glories dead,
 No more imperial, stooped her conquered
 head ;
 Luxuriant Florence chose a softer theme,
 While all was peace, by Arno's silver stream.
 With sweeter notes the Etrurian vales com-
 plained,
 And arts reviving told a Cosmo reigned.
 Their wanton lyres the bards of Provence
 strung,
 Sweet flowed the lays, but love was all they
 sung.
 The gay, &c.

45. But Heaven, still rising in its works decreed

^t Julius the Second, the immediate predecessor of Leo
 the Tenth.

The beauteous union must appear at length,
 Of Tuscan fancy, and Athenian strength :
 One greater muse Eliza's reign adorn,
 And e'en a Shakespear to her fame be born ! 50

Yet ah ! so bright her morning's opening ray,
 In vain our Britain hoped an equal day !
 No second growth the western isle could bear,
 At once exhausted with too rich a year.
 Too nicely Jonson knew the critic's part ; 55
 Nature in him was almost lost in art.
 Of softer mould the gentle Fletcher came,
 The next in order, as the next in name ;
 With pleased attention, 'midst his scenes we
 find
 Each glowing thought that warms the female
 mind ; 60
 Each melting sigh, and every tender tear ;
 The lover's wishes, and the virgin's fear.
 His every strain, ^u the smiles and graces own ;
 But stronger Shakespear felt for man alone :
 Drawn by his pen, our ruder passions stand 65
 The unrivalled picture of his early hand.

VARIATION.

Ver. 63. His every strain the loves and graces own ;

^u Their characters are thus distinguished by Mr. Dryden.

With^w gradual steps and slow, exacter France
 Saw art's fair empire o'er her shores advance :
 By length of toil a bright perfection knew,
 Correctly bold, and just in all she drew : 70
 Till late Corneille, with Lucan's^s spirit fired,
 Breathed the freest strain, as Rome and he inspired :
 And classic judgment gained to sweet Racine
 The temperate strength of Maro's chaster line.

But wilder far the British laurel spread, 75
 And wreaths less artful crown our poet's head.
 Yet he alone to every scene could give
 The historian's truth, and bid the manners live.
 Waked at his call I view, with glad surprise,
 Majestic forms of mighty monarchs rise. 80
 There Henry's trumpets spread their loud alarms,
 And laurelled conquest waits her hero's arms.
 Here gentler Edward claims a pitying sigh,
 Scarce born to honours, and so soon to die !

VARIATION.

Ver. 71. ^dTill late Corneille from epic Lucan brought
 The full expression, and the Roman thought :

About the time of Shakespeare, the poet Hardy was in great repute in France. He wrote, according to Fontenelle, six hundred plays. The French poets after him applied themselves in general to the correct improvement of the stage, which was almost totally disregarded by those of our own country, Jonson excepted.

' The favourite author of the elder Corneille.

Yet shall thy throne, unhappy infant, bring 85
 No beam of comfort to the guilty king :
 The time^y shall come when Glo'ster's heart shall
 bleed,
 In life's last hours, with horror of the deed ;
 When dreary visions shall at last present
 Thy vengeful image in the midnight tent: 90
 Thy hand unseen the secret death shall bear,
 Blunt the weak sword, and break the oppressive
 spear !

Where'er we turn, by fancy charmed, we find
 Some sweet illusion of the cheated mind.
 Oft, wild of wing, she calls the soul to rove 95
 With humbler nature, in the rural grove ;
 Where swains contented own the quiet scene,
 And twilight fairies tread the circled green :
 Dressed by her hand, the woods and valleys
 smile, 99
 And spring diffusive decks the enchanted isle.

O, more than all in powerful genius blest,
 Come, take thine empire o'er the willing breast !

VARIATION.

Ver. 101. O, blest in all that genius gives to charm,
 Whose morals mend us, and whose passions
 warm !

^y Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum
 Intactum Pallanta, etc. VIRG.

Whate'er the wounds this youthful heart shall
feel,

Thy songs support me, and thy morals heal !

There every thought the poet's warmth may raise,

There native music dwells in all the lays. 106

O might some verse with happiest skill persuade

Expressive picture to adopt thine aid !

What wondrous draughts might rise from every
page !

What other Raphaels charm a distant age ! 110

Methinks e'en now I view some free design,

Where breathing nature lives in every line :

Chaste and subdued the modest lights decay,

Steal into shades, and mildly melt away.

VARIATIONS.

Oft let my youth attend thy various page,
Where rich invention rules the unbounded
stage :

There every scene the poet's warmth may raise,
And melting music find the softest lays :

O might the muse with equal ease persuade
Expressive picture to adopt thine aid !

Some powerful Raphael should again appear,
And arts consenting fix their empire here.

Ver. 111. Methinks e'en now I view some fair design,
Where breathing nature lives in every line ;
Chaste and subdued, the modest colours lie,
In fair proportion to the approving eye :
And see where Anthony lamenting stands,
In fixt distress, and spreads his pleading hands :
O'er the pale corse, &c.

And see where Anthony,² in tears approved, 115
 Guards the pale relics of the chief he loved :
 O'er the cold corse the warrior seems to bend,
 Deep sunk in grief, and mourns his murdered
 friend !

Still as they press, he calls on all around,
 Lifts the torn robe, and points the bleeding wound.

But who^a is he, whose brows exalted bear 121
 A wrath impatient, and a fiercer air ?
 Awake to all that injured worth can feel,
 On his own Rome he turns the avenging steel ;
 Yet shall not war's insatiate fury fall 125
 (So heaven ordains it) on the destined wall.

VARIATION.

Ver. 122. A rage impatient, and a fiercer air ?
 E'en now his thoughts with eager vengeance
 doom
 The last sad ruin of ungrateful Rome.
 Till, slow advancing o'er the tented plain,
 In sable weeds, appear the kindred train :
 The frantic mother leads their wild despair,
 Beats her swoln breast, and rends her silver
 hair ;
 And see, he yields ! the tears unbidden start,
 And conscious nature claims the unwilling
 heart !
 O'er all the man, etc.

² See the tragedy of Julius Cæsar.

^a Coriolanus. See Mr. Spence's Dialogue on the Odyssey.

See the fond mother, 'midst the plaintive train,
 Hung on his knees, and prostrate on the plain !
 Touched to the soul, in vain he strives to hide
 The son's affection, in the Roman's pride : 130
 O'er all the man conflicting passions rise ;
 Rage grasps the sword, while pity melts the eyes.

Thus, generous critic, as thy bard inspires,
 The sister arts shall nurse their drooping fires ;
 Each from his scenes her stores alternate bring,
 Blend the fair tints, or wake the vocal string :
 Those sibyl leaves, the sport of every wind,
 (For poets ever were a careless kind,)
 By thee disposed, no farther toil demand,
 But, just to nature, own thy forming hand. 140

So spread o'er Greece, the harmonious whole
 unknown,
 E'en Homer's numbers charmed by parts alone.
 Their own Ulysses scarce had wandered more,
 By winds and waters cast on every shore : 141
 When, raised by fate, some former Hanmer joined
 Each beauteous image of the boundless mind ;
 And bade, like thee, his Athens ever claim
 A fond alliance with the poet's name.

Oxford, Dec. 3,
 1743.

VARIATIONS.

Ver. 136. Spread the fair tints, etc.'

146. Each beauteous image of the tuneful mind ;

DIRGE IN CYMBELINE,

SUNG BY GUIDERUS AND ARVIRAGUS OVER FIDELE,
 SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD.



O fair Fidele's grassy tomb
 Soft maids and village hinds shall
 bring
 Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
 And rifle all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear 5
 To vex with shrieks this quiet grove;
 But shepherd lads assemble here,
 And melting virgins own their love.

No withered witch shall here be seen;
 No goblins lead their nightly crew: 10
 The female fays shall haunt the green,
 And dress thy grave with pearly dew!

VARIATIONS.

- Ver. 1. To fair Pastora's grassy tomb
 7. But shepherd swains assemble here,
 11. But female fays shall haunt the green,
 12. And dress thy bed with pearly dew!

The redbreast oft, at evening hours,
 Shall kindly lend his little aid,
 With hoary moss, and gathered flowers, 15
 To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds and beating rain,
 In tempests shake the sylvan cell;
 Or 'midst the chase, on every plain,
 The tender thought on thee shall dwell; 20

Each lonely scene shall thee restore;
 For thee the tear be duly shed;
 Beloved till life can charm no more,
 And mourned till pity's self be dead.

VARIATIONS.

- Ver. 17. When chiding winds, and beating rain,
 In tempest shake the sylvan cell;
 Or 'midst the flocks, on every plain,
 21. Each lovely scene shall thee restore;
 23. Beloved till life could charm no more,

Ambiguous looks, that scorn and yet relent,
 Denials mild, and firm unaltered truth;
 Reluctant pride, and amorous faint consent,
 And meeting ardours, and exulting youth. 20


Sleep, wayward God! hath sworn, while these
 remain,
 With flattering dreams to dry his nightly tear,
 And cheerful hope, so oft invoked in vain,
 With fairy songs shall soothe his pensive ear.

If, bound by vows to friendship's gentle side, 25
 And fond of soul, thou hop'st an equal grace,
 If youth or maid thy joys and griefs divide,
 O, much entreated. leave this fatal place!

Sweet peace, who long hath shunned my plain-
 tive day, 29
 Consents at length to bring me short delight,
 Thy careless steps may scare her doves away,
 And grief with raven note usurp the night.


TO MISS AURELIA C—R,

ON HER WEEPING AT HER SISTER'S WEDDING.

 EASE, fair Aurelia, cease to mourn,
 Lament not Hannah's happy state ;
 You may be happy in your turn,
 And seize the treasure you regret.


With love united Hymen stands, 5
 And softly whispers to your charms,
 " Meet but your lover in my bands,
 You'll find your sister in his arms."

SONNET.

 HEN Phœbe formed a wanton smile,
 My soul ! it reach'd not here :
 Strange, that thy peace, thou trem-
 bler, flies
 Before a rising tear !
 From 'midst the drops, my love is born, 5
 That o'er those eyelids rove :
 Thus issued from a teeming wave
 The fabled queen of love.

SONG.

THE SENTIMENTS BORROWED FROM SHAKESPEARE.¹

OUNG Damon of the vale is dead,
 Ye lowly hamlets, moan;
 A dewy turf lies o'er his head,
 And at his feet a stone.

His shroud, which death's cold damps destroy.
 Of snow white threads was made: 6
 All mourned to see so sweet a boy
 In earth for ever laid.

Pale pansies o'er his corpse were placed,
 Which, plucked before their time, 10
 Bestrewed the boy, like him to waste
 And wither in their prime.

VARIATION.

Ver. 2 Ye lowland hamlets, moan;

¹ It is uncertain where this poem first appeared. It was inserted in the Edinburgh edition of the Poets, 1794. A manuscript copy in the collection recently belonging to Mr. Upcott, and now in the British Museum, is headed, "Written by Collins when at Winchester School. From a Manuscript."

~~But~~ will he ne'er return, whose tongue
Could tune the rural lay;
Ah, no! his bell of peace is rung,
His lips are cold as clay.

They bore him out at twilight hour,
The youth who loved so well:
Ah, me! how many a true love-shower
Of kind remembrance fell!

20

Each maid was woe—but Lucy chief,
Her grief o'er all was tried;
Within his grave she dropped in grief,
And o'er her loved one died.

